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# A Suitable Match: Love and marriage amongst middle class Gujaratis in India and the UK

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**Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Health**
**School of Community and Health Studies, City University London**
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# Declaration

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# Thesis Abstract

The thesis is an ethnographic study exploring understandings of love and intimacy amongst young middle class Indians of Gujarati origin living in the UK and India. It is based primarily upon repeat in-depth interviews, and participant observation. A two site comparative study was used to enable an understanding of how social and economic contexts shape cultural constructions of intimate relationships and sexuality. I explore these issues through the narratives of men and women who are either single, in the process of courtship/pre-marital relationships, or are recently married. The study is informed by recent work in the 'political economy of love' and Giddens' thesis on the 'Transformation of Intimacy'. I examine to what extent young Gujaratis aspire to or are moving towards a more individualized, companionate and 'western' model of relationships, and whether such a 'transformation' impacts on the gender relations between husband and wife.

I argue that while global ideologies of romantic love are pervasive, they are interpreted by informants within local understandings of appropriate marriage and relationships. As such, informants in Baroda, India are negotiating new forms of courtship which fit in with the ideals of love, but also with more traditional aspects of arranged marriage as a system of status maintenance. They want to be in love with their future spouse, but only within socially acceptable models of endogamous marriage. In contrast in the UK love marriage is idealised over arranged marriage. Informants distanced themselves from any sense of 'arrangement' in their relationships, which seemed to call into question for them the veractiy of their love. The social context of the UK both supports and facilitates love marriage amongst young people, while the converse is true in India. Largely men and women in both contexts appeared to have similar aspirations for their relationships, though women were likely to be more in favour of egalitarian values. What this meant was interpreted differently in India and the UK. In neither setting, however, was gender equality fully realised in the lives of the informants due to both structural and normative constraints.

# Notes on Translation and Transcription

The majority of the interviews and conversations undertaken as part of the data collection in this thesis were conducted in English. Where conversations were translated or conducted with an interpreter this is indicated in the text, including which parts of the conversation were translated and which were conducted in English.

Informants had different standards of fluency in English. In (re)presenting their accounts, extracts from recorded interviews have not been edited or 'tidied up' in any way. Words are presented as they were spoken, including grammatical errors, laughter and pauses. A beat pause is indicated by . Two beats by .. And so on. Alternatively the time of silence is recorded in square parentheses [3 seconds]. Other nonverbal forms of communication are also indicated in square parentheses e.g. [laugh]. Parts of a quote edited because they are not directly relevant to the discussion are indicated by […]. When two people overlap in speech / is used to indicate the moment of overlap. For example:

A: I went to / the shop

B: /we go every day

Where 'the shop' and 'we go' were spoken at the same time. These approaches to the presentation of data are used to allow the reader (and researcher) to experience as much as possible the 'feel' of the interview and the flow of conversation between researcher and researched (Sandelowski 1994).

# PART ONE: INTRODUCTION and SETTING THE SCENE

# Chapter One: Introduction

In 2002 I took a gap year from my studies and, like many students before me, I went to India. But while others headed to the cool mountains of Shimla, the humid backwaters of Kerala or the beautiful beaches of Goa, I went to Baroda in Gujarat to work for an international non-governmental organisation (NGO). Baroda is not a common destination for travellers, in many ways it is a non-descript city. With around two million people, it is neither big nor small. There are no tourist attractions to speak of, few beaches to bath on and perhaps more importantly (for some) Gujarat is the only state in India where alcohol is illegal. I knew none of this when I headed there, for actually I had requested a placement in French-speaking Africa, and if it wasn't for some glitch in computer or administrative procedure I would never have come to Baroda.

I spent a year in India on that first trip, six months of which were in Baroda. Those six months were formative in sewing the seeds of this thesis. It was nothing to do with the NGO, although that work was interesting, I was more intrigued by the friends I made and the conversations we had (frequently) about love, marriage, and sex. To my surprise, my Gujarati friends had very different notions and ideas of love; until that time I thought love was a universal emotion and marriage its obvious culmination. My friends disavowed me of this belief.

One such friend was Antuk. Antuk spoke with me incessantly about his dreams of falling in love and his expectations and curiosity about sex. He was fascinated by 'western' culture, and told me he wished for a more open and modern India in which young people could date and court more freely. Eager to support such a romantic, I encouraged him to ask a girl out. To my surprise he asked out my Icelandic colleague Jane. Jane was as surprised as I was, but she accepted in the name of cultural curiosity. Afterwards she described their date to me: Antuk arrived to pick her up in a chauffeur driven car with roses, chocolates, and a bottle of cola waiting for her inside. He ceremoniously poured her some coke into two champagne glasses, and they headed to the movies. After the cinema (a romantic Bollywood film) he brought her out for coffee and dessert, then promptly brought her home by ten p.m. Jane described the date as 'film-like' in its romanticism. She enjoyed the date, but felt overwhelmed by Antuk's romantic attentions. Antuk told me that he enjoyed the date with Jane but that he had decided not to ask her out again. This was because he knew their relationship could never lead to marriage and Jane seemed too nice to have a 'time pass' (fling) relationship with. I asked him why he couldn't marry Jane and he looked at me aghast. First she was a foreigner and second he fully intended to have an arranged marriage[1]. His parents had already started looking for a wife for him.

[1] The terms 'arranged marriage' and 'love marriage' as understood by informants are analyzed in-depth in later chapters. Let me indicate to the reader what they generally imply: Arranged marriages are matches initiated by parents normally

Four months later, Antuk was engaged to an American-born Gujarati girl, Leela. Antuk and Leela met once briefly when she and her family flew over to Baroda to finalise the wedding arrangements. At that time he told me that he loved Leela and was 'dying' to marry her. While I never really got a chance to speak with her, he told me that she too felt the same way. After the wedding, Antuk moved to New Jersey where his wife was from. He wrote to me soon after that his wife insisted on bringing him breakfast in bed every morning. She was everything he ever wanted.

Antuk's story shook me on many levels. I found the story of his marriage with Leela incompatible with his earlier pronouncements of the importance of love and romance. I also couldn't understand why he felt that he should have an arranged marriage, or even why he would want one. But finally, Leela, who had been brought up in the USA, dumbfounded me. How could someone with an upbringing ostensibly similar to mine (or at least I assumed it was) ultimately have an arranged marriage to a man she barely knew? (And why on earth was she bringing him breakfast in bed every morning?)

Such ambiguities and questions were frequent. I found that many of my friends in Baroda both idealised romance and love, *and* wanted to have an arranged marriage. There seemed to be a strong ambivalence towards 'western culture' and romance, which was at the same time enticing and repelling. Young people wanted changes, but these changes seemed unclear and sometimes conflicting.

These ambiguities and questions led me to this thesis. I returned to Baroda in 2006 as part of my PhD and, using an ethnographic approach, spent eight months collecting the relationship views and experiences of men and women aged between 20 and 30 years old. I interviewed newly married and unmarried men and women, and some older informants too, such as parents and matchmakers. I 'hung out' with old friends and sought out new people who could tell me their perspectives on love and marriage in a more systematic way. With pages of field notes and recorded interviews, I then returned to London and conducted similar fieldwork with Gujaratis brought up and living in the UK. Such a comparison allowed me to unpack how being brought up 'Gujarati' but in the UK or a rapidly modernising India impacts on relationship and marriage trajectories. As such my interest was sparked by love, and this theme is explored in the pages that follow, but this thesis can also be viewed as a case study of the effects of globalisation and transnationalism: How are global ideologies (of love and romance) interpreted and lived out in two very different settings by members of the same cultural ethnic group? As I will explain, this will

within a person's caste and religion. Love marriages are initiated by couples who have fallen in love and chosen their own marriage partners.

contribute to greater understanding of the processes of globalisation, as well as to changing forms of intimacy and marriage.

## *1.1 Background*

In recent years the study of love and intimacy has received substantial attention. This work was sparked in part by Giddens's seminal book 'The Transformation of Intimacy' (1992) and a growing body of literature which argued that emotions were socially constructed (Abu-Lughod 1987; Lutz 1988). In 'The Transformation of Intimacy' Giddens argued that in modern societies couples are now focusing more on their intimate partners for their emotional and affective fulfilment, rather than traditional kin groups or extended families (see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2002). This, coupled with the 'liberation' of sexuality after the invention of contraception, has led to what Giddens refers to as the 'pure relationship'. The 'pure relationship' is signified by equality between the sexes and a decreased importance on contractual marriage.

Researchers working in non-western settings around the globe have argued that globalisation, transnational migration, and modernisation have helped spread ideologies of romantic love and the 'pure relationship'. These researchers argue that there has been an 'affective turn' in relationships and marriage, a shift in ideologies from 'traditional' to 'companionate' (Hirsch and Wardlow 2006; Padilla *et al.* 2007; Rebhun 1999). 'Companionate marriage' refers to a marriage which is based on more emotional than economic or reproductive motives, with less emphasis on family and kin relationships.[2] Global media and transnational links spread ideologies of romantic love and increased levels of disposable income give young people access to funds which facilitate more independence in the choosing of a spouse (Padilla *et al.* 2007). In many of these studies, the ideals of 'companionate marriage' are associated by individuals with modernity and progress. For example, Ahearn (2001) conducted an ethnography of love letters amongst young people in Nepal. She found that her informants used love as a means to connect to a 'development discourse' of progress and modernity, and that a 'love relationship' was associated with 'life success'.

In India and amongst the Indian diaspora there is some indication that young middle class men and women are taking a more active role in the selection of their future spouse, suggesting an increased emphasis on intimacy in marriage (Donner Forthcoming; Fuller and Narasimhan 2008; Parry 2001; Percot 2006; Raj 2003). For example, Fuller and Narasimhan (2008) conducted research amongst middle-class Brahmans in Tamilnadu, south India. They observed that young people valued "personal compatibility" along with education and employment when choosing a

[2] Giddens (1992:155), sees 'companionate marriage' as similar to the 'pure relationship' having "some degree of equality and mutual sympathy" but with less sexual intimacy.

future spouse. According to Fuller and Narasimhan, this shows that the lines between arranged and love marriage are blurring. For some authors this change in marital values implies a *global* 'transformation of intimacy' (cf. Giddens 1992) (e.g. Parry 2001). Such changes have been attributed to economic liberalisation and middle class exposure to global media.

India has experienced an era of rapid economic development since the 1990s. Gujarat has experienced much of this economic growth in the last ten years – eliminating its budget deficit and building up a budget surplus of Rs 18.03 billion (£254 million GBP) (Roy 2007). With national economic development has come a large consumer-driven middle class (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995; Ganguly-Scrase 2003; Lakha 1999; Oza 2001; Phadke 2005). To tap into this wealth marketing firms and the media have targeted the middle classes through images of a hyper consumerist cosmopolitan lifestyle; status is increasingly associated with the accumulation of wealth and consumer goods (Beteille 1996; Desai 2008). This 'new middle class' is implicated in the modernising project of India; while before the middle classes were heralded as the purveyors of Indian tradition, they are now regarded as the drivers of Indian modernisation and globalisation (Fernandes 2000, 2006).

Another consequence of economic liberalisation has been the opening up of India to global media; already back in 2001 there were over 40 international and domestic cable channels such as CNN, BBC, and Star TV present in India (Oza 2001). Dell argues that western[3] media available to the middle and upper classes has provoked a kind of "deterritorialisation,"[4] destabilising Indian notions of intimacy and relationships (2005:194). Arranged marriage and chaste female behaviour were traditionally icons of middle class behaviour. But in the popular 'western' media, and increasingly in Bollywood stories, romantic spontaneous love affairs are often deemed essential to spouse selection. This exposure, coupled with the aforementioned changes, has led to increasing questions and ambiguity in what it means to be a 'middle class Indian' and the appropriate place of love and courtship in marriage.

If there are changes in the understandings and meanings of marriage and the importance of intimacy between a couple, there might well be corresponding changes in terms of sexuality, since sexuality is often understood as a part of intimacy. But few studies in India have attempted

[3] Whilst I am aware of the debates surrounding terms like the 'West' (Said 1979), I use them just as my informants did in referring to countries like Canada, the United States and United Kingdom. Likewise informants use terms such as 'modern' and 'traditional' in particular when speaking about their marriage ideals. I am not concerned with whether romantic love is 'really' modern or western, but rather how "the reification of these categories affects the ways in which they live their lives" (Rebhun 1999:4).

[4] A concept Dell adapted from Arjun Appadurai (Appadurai 1996) 'Deterritorialisation' refers to the work which immigrants do to reconstruct their imagined communities in a foreign location, Dell argues that the globalised market in India creates a kind of 'inverse deterritorialisation' (Dell 2005:188-9).

to explore sexuality from a relationship perspective.[5] The bulk of research on sexual behaviour has either come from a public health perspective, and thus has concentrated on 'risky' groups or behaviour (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002) or come from an anthropological perspective and has explored the significance of religious texts and taboos on sexual behaviour (Srivastava 2007). Both of these kinds of studies have tended to portray sex and sexuality in India as negative, in particular for women. Studies which explore sexuality as an arena of pleasure and intimacy are few (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002).

In the UK around 1.3 million people identify as of Indian ethnicity (Office of National Statistics 2007). It is estimated that around half of the British Indian population are of Gujarati origin (Bhachu 1986). Gujaratis are known historically within India as hard-working commercial traders with a long standing experience in migration for economic improvement (Lyon 1973). In the UK Gujaratis have primarily come through East Africa, after the 'Africanisation' policies put into practice in the 1970s. This experience as 'twice migrants' has been used in part to explain their relatively high educational and occupational attainment in comparison to other ethnic minority groups. Ramji argues that migration through Africa meant that Gujarati Indians were 'migration savvy' and cosmopolitan, and many had discarded the migration 'myth of return', since those that could have returned did so after the Ugandan and Kenyan 'Africanisation' (Ramji 2006). Their long history of migration also means that there is a large proportion of Gujaratis born and brought up in the UK (i.e. second generation).

Studies which explore the experiences of British Asians have tended to assume a 'culture clash' between the first and second generation. Second generation Asians are typified as being caught between the 'traditional' Indian culture of their parents and 'modern' British culture. Brah argues that the focus on 'culture clash' reifies the existence of one 'Asian' and one 'British' culture, ignoring differences in class, age, education, gender and so on, as well as instances of cultural change and negotiation (Brah 1996). Researchers have tended to both over interpret the importance of culture as an explanatory variable, and under appreciate the potential for cultural change and negotiation. In studies on marriage, the assumption is that this culture clash will lead to conflict between the generations; many studies explore whether the second generation prefer a love or arranged marriage (e.g. Ballard 1977). This dichotomy ignores the spectrum of marriage practices which exist amongst South Asians in Britain, further typifying Asian culture in Britain as static and overlooking the agency of young second generation Asians (Prinjha 1999). But Raj and Prinjha have both found evidence of second generation Indians negotiating new forms of marriage with their parents, taking into account both personal affective goals and their parents' more 'traditional' criteria of a good match (Prinjha 1999; Raj 2003).

[5] For two noteworthy exceptions see Abraham (2002) and Reddy (2006).

In terms of intimacy and sexuality there has been little attention given to Indians in the UK. Most studies on youth sexuality are led by a concern for the relatively high rates of teenage pregnancy (Phoenix 1993). The evidence on UK Indians and Asians suggests low rates of premarital sex and teenage pregnancy (Fenton *et al.* 2005). On the other hand, one recent study conducted with young ethnic minority men and women in the UK found that opinions amongst British Indians on sex and sex before marriage are 'changing fast', with many young people having a more 'romantic' interpretation of relationships (French *et al.* 2005).

Thus in both India and the UK there is evidence of some changes in conceptions of intimacy and marriage. But while in both settings we might expect young people to be exposed to ideologies of 'companionate marriage' and romantic love, we cannot assume that these ideologies will result in a homogenous understanding of marriage, and the role of love and intimacy within it. Studies in other settings have shown that there is much diversity in how wider discourses of 'companionate marriage' and romantic love have been interpreted within local cultural and socio-economic contexts (see Hirsch and Wardlow 2006). A comparative study will enable a greater understanding of how and why understandings and practices of marriage change in particular ways in different contexts. Similar studies comparing a cultural group in the 'sending' country with the same group in the 'receiving' country have been able to unpack how and why understandings of relationships change or remain the same (e.g. Hirsch 2003). This study follows on from this tradition.

## *1.2 Research questions*

*Aim*

To explore intimate relationship ideals and experiences of young middle class Gujaratis in the UK and India and the factors which contribute to how and why they differ.

*Questions:*

1. What do young Gujaratis seek from their marital and non-marital relationships?
2. How are relationship ideals shaped by caste/class/gender/'culture'?
3. How do these ideals and expectations shape courtship and intimacy?
4. To what degree do men and women have control over their relationships?
5. In what ways does being brought up in the UK or India affect these ideals and experiences?

## *1.3 Significance of the study*

If it is true that global ideologies of companionate marriage and modern intimacy are transforming

marriage around the world, it is also important to interrogate how these ideologies interact with local cultures and contexts. This is important for two reasons: First because it will increase our understanding of how globalisation and global discourses are interpreted and transformed in different contexts and by different people. This will contribute to knowledge of the processes and outcomes of 'globalisation' and to our understanding of emerging Indian modernity. And second because personal relationships and the family are a key part of social cohesion and new or different modes of relating to one another can have profound consequences on gender and sexual identities (Jamieson 1998). It is important then to describe and document these changes in order to understand how personal life is changing amongst Indians in the UK and India.

Most studies on Indian marriage have tended to explore arranged marriage processes and systems, disregarding other marital forms as 'deviant' (Donner 2002; Mody 2008). Ignoring new and emerging forms of marriage contributes to a perception of Indian culture as fixed and unchanging. This is worrying because Asians in Britain have been typified as 'too cultural' and traditional and therefore incompatible with British modern culture (Alexander 2002, 2004). Studies on British Asians have tended to focus on the difference between them and the white majority, over-essentialising ethnicity as if it were the only driver of identity (Brah 1996; Phoenix 1988). In this thesis I compare Gujaratis in two different contexts, facilitating a more dynamic understanding of culture: Being Gujarati means different things to different people in different contexts. While people may draw on shared understandings, they might apply these understandings in different ways depending on the context of their lives. Such an approach will ensure that structural and contextual factors, as well as 'culture', are taken into account. The transnational approach to research also facilitates an understanding of shared transnational ideologies between Gujaratis in India and those in the UK.

Furthermore, while there is an obvious link between relationship ideals, concepts of marriage, love, and how people express themselves sexually, this link has been generally ignored in the literature on both sexuality and marriage. Most research on sexuality has tended to reduce sexuality to sexual behaviour, or specific sexual acts which relate to public health outcomes such as unprotected intercourse which contributes to the spread of HIV in India and teenage pregnancy in the UK. Few studies have looked at sexuality in terms of relationships, marriage, and love. While research on 'risky' sex is no doubt important, it has not brought about an increased understanding of sexuality, what it means to people and how it is effected by the social and cultural milieu in which it is constructed (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002). The same can be noted of gender and gender relations, that is, empirical studies looking at gender tend to think about couples in terms of power, ignoring how affect and intimacy may interact with gender relations

between a couple (cf. Wardlow and Hirsch 2006:3). This thesis then can also be seen as part of an attempt to re-enter affect into discussions of marriage, gender, and intimate relationships.

### *1.4 Why study middle class Gujaratis?*

India is a large country of approximately one billion people, multiple different regional languages, and cultural variations. I thus felt it was important to restrict my study to one particular region. Since my initial interest in this topic was sparked by my previous experience in Gujarat, as described above, I was obviously drawn to Baroda again. Later when I thought of comparing Indians in the UK with Indians in India, I discovered that approximately half of the Indian population in the UK are of Gujarati origin (Bhachu 1986), thus facilitating a valid comparison between the two. But while I have chosen the cultural category of 'Gujarati', I recognise that any individual may have, as Baumann puts it, "almost as many communities and cultures as a sociologist may distinguish roles" (Baumann 1996:23). Thus as shall become apparent, informants refer to 'Gujaratiness', 'Indianness' and other labels while explaining and interpreting their behaviour or experiences. Nonetheless, I felt it was important to put a geographical limit on the study in recognition of the diversity of cultural history and practices between different states in India.

My interest in the middle classes[6] was driven by the literature which suggests that they are the group most exposed to ideals of 'companionate marriage' and romantic love (Parry 2001; Puri 1999). The middle classes are also implicated in the 'modernising' project of the new global India (Fernandes 2000, 2006), which is associated with changes in gender and youth culture. Furthermore, studies on sexuality and marriage have tended to concentrate on the rural, tribal, socially disadvantaged and/or those considered sexually deviant, such as men who have sex with men or sex workers (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002). This study then addresses a gap in the literature. It is important to address this gap since ignoring the sexuality of the middle classes suggests an acceptance that theirs is 'normal' and uninteresting, thus placing the sexuality of 'others' as unusual and problematic.

Furthermore, as Puri has noted, the middle classes' "bodies, sexualities, and gender identities are sites where cultural notions of normality and, indeed, social responsibility are contested" (Puri 1999:4). That is, their practices and beliefs become the respectable ideal. For example, Caplan has shown how a woman at home as full time carer was used by upper caste women to delineate themselves from the lower castes and classes who by economic necessity needed a two working

[6] Middle class in this thesis is defined by educational occupational attainment, salary levels and local understandings of the markers of cultural resources interpreted as 'middle class' (Bourdieu 1984). This is further elaborated on in Chapters Four and Five.

household (Caplan 1985). This has trickled down as an aspiration to the middle classes who draw heavily on upper caste ideology in their understanding of middle class identity. Osella and Osella (2006) argue that this too has become an aspiration, though normally unattainable, for lower class groups. Thus it is important to trace changes in ideologies and practices amongst the middle classes not only as interest in itself, but because these ideologies and practices can have wider ramifications.

In terms of caste and religion, I have not been restrictive; based on the literature and my own experiences I felt that 'middle class' was more likely to be a relevant category and influence over my informants. This group has been implicated in the perceived changes in marriage traditions in India over the last ten years. It is worth then exploring marriage from the perspective of class, rather than specifically within the narrow confines of particular caste groups. As Fuller and Narisimhan argue:

> "To look at arranged endogamous marriage in relation to caste or subcaste alone is a general mistake, because companionate marriage as it now exists also plays a fundamental role in the emergence and reproduction of the middle class." (2008:752)

Furthermore, the importance of wealth as an indicator of status (rather than caste) is increasing (Beteille 1996; Desai 2008). Nonetheless the middle classes are primarily drawn from the middle and high castes groups, so almost all of my informants come from within these groups. In terms of religion I had initially decided to recruit only Hindus and Jains,[7] but due to a local controversy about Muslims not being 'real' Gujaratis, I felt that this was a controversial stance to take. In the end only one Muslim took part in Baroda and London. From such a small sample it is difficult to say whether religion made an impact on the data, although it did not seem to have much influence in the narratives of my informants.

## *1.5 Overview of methodology*

In this thesis I take 'a political economy of love' approach, seeking to explore how the broader economic and social contexts interact with global and local understandings and practices of marriage and relationships (Padilla *et al.* 2007). I do this through a two site ethnographic study, comparing ideologies and experiences of young Gujarati men and women in the UK and India. As Padilla *et al.* state: "cross-cultural examinations of love permit the analyst a privileged position from which to consider the power and function of cultural, economic, and social forces in shaping love" (2007:ix). There is a long history of cultural comparison in anthropology and it is a well used tool in sociology too. Comparing data can help to elucidate concepts which come to light as

[7] Jainism began in the 6th century B.C. as a reformation movement within Hinduism and thus Jains share many beliefs and practices with Hindus.

'interesting' by their very difference or absence in another context. To facilitate this comparison, I conducted fieldwork in India and then the UK, using repeat in-depth interviews, participant and non-participant observation, and group discussions.

The ethnographic approach reflects my interest in culture and the "insider's" emic perception of reality – that is how the study participants or 'informants' understand their lives (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). Through its attention to everyday practices and context, ethnography allows for a holistic understanding of the cultural and social basis of the respondents' stories without losing sight of the differences between individuals and the part each plays in shaping her/his life (Cornwell 1984). Furthermore the iterative and open process of qualitative techniques enable an exploration of the participants' perception of reality i.e. what marriage and family mean to the participants themselves and how this is reflected in their behaviour (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983).

In combination with the ethnographic method, I have used a modified grounded theory approach to analysis, as devised by Kathy Charmaz. Charmaz takes a constructivist approach which recognises that the data are created through interactions between the researcher and participants (Charmaz 2006; Charmaz and Mitchell 1996). The constructivist is interested in how and why participants construct meanings and actions in particular situations – the interpretive work that participants do – while also acknowledging that the resultant theory is itself an interpretation (Bryant 2002; Charmaz 2000, 2006). Grounded theory compliments ethnography through its iterative approach to data collection and analysis, thus helping the researcher remain close to the data (Charmaz 2006).

## *1.6 Organisation of thesis*

In the pages that follow I will show that young Indians in the UK and India, prompted by global ideologies that link 'love' with 'modernity', aspire to 'companionate marriages' of love and equality. But this desire for love is realised in two very different ways. In explaining these differences I address both structure and agency – I show how and why men and women deliberately shape their own relationships within the context of macro level structures that determine the range of choices available to them.

In telling this story I have divided the thesis into three sections. **Part One** comprises this introduction as well as Chapters Two and Three. Chapter Two sets the scene through a discussion of the theoretical debates around intimacy, marriage, gender, and sexuality on which my ethnography draws. I also outline some relevant findings from literature in the UK and South

Asia. In Chapter Three I describe and explain the methods I used in data collection and analysis. In this chapter I also consider the difference between ethnography 'at home' and ethnography abroad and how these differences impacted on the data I collected.

**Part Two** describes the kinds of ideals and ideologies my informants subscribed to. The chapters are divided into findings from Baroda and London. In Chapters Four and Five I outline the ways in which my informants understood ethnicity, modernity, and class which, as I have discussed briefly, are deeply entwined with debates around marriage, gender, and relationships. In Chapters Six and Seven I explore young people's desire for love in India and the UK, and how they understood this love. These ideals of love also shape understandings of sexuality and the place of desire in intimate relationships.

In **Part Three** I describe the more practical implications of the ideologies explored in Part Two. Chapters Eight and Nine focus on how the desire for love shapes courtship and relationship patterns in the two contexts. I use the term 'courtship' in deference to the fact that, as I shall explain, informants saw dating and relationships as a prelude to marriage. I describe in detail contemporary meanings attached to love and arranged marriage and how informants are negotiating new forms of these which fit in with their ideals of love and intimacy. But I also interrogate whether these changes result in any meaningful difference to the choice and agency of young people. Then in Chapters Ten and Eleven I explore informants' narratives around marital relationships, focusing particularly on gender in marriage. Using Connell's framework to explore gender relations, these chapters explore to what degree ideals of 'companionate marriage' have impacted on gender relations within marriage.

Finally in **Part Four** I bring together the findings from both contexts in the concluding Chapter Twelve. I discuss how being brought up in the UK or India impacts on Gujaratis' understandings and experiences of marriage and intimate relationships, as well as the implications of these findings.

# Chapter Two: Literature Review

In exploring the research questions outlined in Chapter One I have drawn on the theoretical and empirical literature which I outline below. The first section details the 'sensitising concepts' which informed the research design and analysis. This approach to theory has been outlined by Kathy Charmaz, whose constructivist grounded theory methodology I have employed in the design and analysis of this study (see Charmaz 2006, 2000; Charmaz and Mitchell 1996). Charmaz advocates clarifying the 'sensitising concepts' that lead the researcher to ask questions of the data in a particular way (Charmaz 2006:16-17). This is in contrast to 'classical' grounded theory where the researcher should avoid as much as possible entering the literature before the collection and analysis of data, to avoid the threat of 'receiving theory' from other people's work (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Such an approach was not attempted since knowledge of the literature in a field ensures that previous work is not duplicated and alerts the researcher to gaps in theorising (Lempert 2007:254). Furthermore, the possibility of approaching research design or data collection without prior theory in mind is unlikely since researchers "draw on their existing theoretical knowledge in order to understand, describe and explain empirically observed social phenomena" (Kelle 2005:19).[8]

In the second part of this chapter, I will review the 'empirical' literature from the UK and India. I have concentrated on literature relating to love and intimacy, marriage, and sexuality. In looking at the Indian literature, I have primarily concerned myself with literature on the middle classes, since this was most relevant to my data. That is, studies on middle class Tamils have more relevance to my findings than studies on rural low caste Gujaratis. (In Chapter Four, I expand on what 'middle class' means in this study and review some recent work on middle class Indian lifestyles.)

## *2.1 'Sensitising Concepts'*

### 2.11 Love and Intimacy

Love and intimacy are the central themes of enquiry of this thesis. I use the term 'love' to highlight my interest in the *emotion* of love, and intimacy[9] to refer to the *practice* of loving – that is more broadly around the display of love, feelings and understandings of closeness, relationships, and sexuality. Together the terms cover beliefs, ideals, forms of expression and the kinds of relationships which these understandings shape. I could have looked at filial love, parental love or

[8] In Chapter Three I will explain how I have used constructivist grounded theory in the design and analysis of the research.
[9] For a discussion on the changing definitions and interpretations of intimacy in academic literature see Gabb (2008).

indeed love between friends, but my interest, as outlined in the introduction, was sparked by young Indians' romantic aspirations, which is what I concentrate on here.[10]

Love in this thesis, following the ethno-psychology school approach to emotion[11] (Abu-Lughod 1987; Lutz 1988), is understood to differ by culture, historical period, class, and geographical location. For example, Les Back (2007) has argued that working class people in England use less discursive ways of expressing love, preferring 'actions rather than words' (see also Illouz 2008). In understanding how cultural ideals of emotions come to shape my informants' relationships, I have drawn on the work of the sociologist Arlie Hochschild. According to Hochshild (1983) individuals not only experience emotion differently but also apply cultural and ideological standards to gauge the suitability of emotions occurring during social interactions. People manage their emotions according to the 'feeling rules' of the situation. I am interested in how cultural 'feeling rules' and ideologies around appropriate or ideal relationships influence the kinds of relationships people have and the way they act within them.

Emotions are part of a "cultural and interpersonal process of naming, justifying and persuading people in relationship to each other" (Lutz 1988:5). That is, emotions are *socially* produced through interactions with others. Different actors may have different motivations to behave in a particular way and may not draw on culturally shared 'feeling rules' in the same way. Gender may also impact on the feeling rules that individuals subscribe to and thus those in heterosexual relationships may need to negotiate emotional expectations between them. In addition, we need to recognise the impact of the socio-economic context in which informants live, and the way this can shape understandings of love and relationships. As Thomas and Cole assert, cultural and material conditions "constitute certain kinds of subjects and enable particular kinds of relationships" (2009:4). For example, Jessica Gregg (2006) found that in a shanty town in Brazil women rejected a more romantic interpretation of relationships. Gregg argues that the structural violence and enduring patriarchal context made any kind of marriage unappealing to women. For Gregg's informants falling in love would have been counterproductive to survival. On the other hand, Hirsch in Mexico noted that her informants' access to remittances from the USA meant they were exposed to global ideologies of romance on newly bought televisions. This, coupled with socioeconomic changes in Mexico such as the increased leisure time afforded to youngsters, facilitated a growing desire for courtship and self-chosen marriage (Hirsch 2003). This kind of analysis which examines how love is embedded in historically situated worlds, cultural practices, and material conditions is known as the 'political economy of love approach', an approach that

[10] I should also emphasise that I have confined my thesis to look at heterosexual relationships. 'Heterosexuality' was not a prerequisite for inclusion in the study, but researching same sex relationships would have required a specific research design and sampling strategy outside the remit of this thesis.
[11] Previous to this, the predominant theory was that emotions were a biological given, universal across all cultures (cf. Darwin 1872; Hatfield *et al.* 1994).

has gained ground over the last ten years in ethnographic studies of love and intimacy (see: Padilla *et al.* 2007; Thomas and Cole 2009).

*Development of theory of love and intimacy*

The development of theory around the social construction of love has largely emerged from historical studies of the family in Europe. Much of this literature has been concerned with when and how love emerged as an important part of family life. Most pinpoint the industrial revolution as a pivotal moment in the 'history of love'. Variously it has been argued that falling mortality rates and better health in the 18th century meant that people had longer to form attachments with their partners and children (Aries 1962; Shorter 1975). Or that as young people became more economically independent of their parents, they were freer to choose their own spouse (Engels 1972). These authors have been critiqued for assuming that love did not exist before the 18th century, despite previous evidence of 'love marriages' (Rebhun 1999). Furthermore, their theories seem to rest on a naturalistic model of love, as if love was hiding, waiting to be freed by the 'right' conditions.

Over the last twenty years, studies on love and intimacy have explored how 'modern life' has impacted on intimate relationships. The most widely known and cited of these are Giddens's thesis on the 'transformation of intimacy' and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's theory on the relationship between love and individualisation. These and other theorists of 'detraditionalisation', argue that modern intimacy consists of a prioritisation of personal choice over kin obligations, an affirmation of sexual intimacy, and an emphasis on the couple as the centre of intimate life.

For Giddens, the 'pure relationship' is emblematic of the 'transformation of intimacy' (Giddens 1991:58). The pure relationship is signified by equality between men and women. Equality is achieved through the development of trust and respect between the partners after they reveal their inner most thoughts and selves to one another (Giddens 1992). According to Giddens, the pure relationship has been enabled by advances in contraception which have 'liberated' sex from reproduction and given more autonomy to women (1992:28). Such a separation of sexuality from reproduction has encouraged a view of sex as a means of self-realisation and an "expression of intimacy" (Giddens 1991:164; 1992:84). But the pure relationship is not a permanent one, it is based on "confluent love" – a love that exists solely for whatever rewards that relationship can "deliver" – and will cease to exist when the couple are no longer satisfied by it (1991:6).

On a similar note, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995; 2002) have argued that couples are increasingly seeking their primary gratification from one another, rather than from kin relations. This increased 'hunger for love' has been prompted by a modern society distinguished by

uncertainty, individualization, and risk. As an example they cite the increasing numbers of women working which, they argue, has led to the breakdown of traditional roles of the sexes and an increased concentration on individual fulfillment and self progression. While this leads to more confrontation between men and women, it also paradoxically leads the couple to find comfort from their partner in times of uncertainty and risk.

The overarching theme between these and other authors espousing the detraditionalisation thesis is that modern intimacy is signified by increased emphasis on the romantic partner for intimacy, equality between the sexes and less permanency in relationships. Lynn Jamieson, however, has argued that while popular discourses might support the idea of increased equality and intimacy between couples, there is little evidence that disclosing intimacy is an organizing principle in people's lives (Jamieson 1998:2). In particular there is little empirical evidence supporting the idea of an equal relationship of intimates. She writes;

> "Giddens suggests that high rates of dissolution among couples reflect the fragility of the 'pure relationships', which require the psychological balancing act of sustaining mutual trust while knowing the relationship is only 'good until further notice'. However, it seems more plausible to see the fragility of heterosexual couples as a consequence of the tension between strengthening cultural emphasis on intimacy, equality and mutuality in relationships and the structural supports of gender inequalities, which make these ideals difficult to attain." (Jamieson 1999:486)

Jamieson and other feminists have pointed to repeated empirical studies which show that women still take on a subordinate role within heterosexual relationships, even as 'intimacy' may be valued more.

*The relevance of modern intimacy theory in non-Western settings*

Despite Jamieson's eloquent critique, and the arguable euro/western centrism of these theories, theories of modern intimacy appeared to have influenced literature on love and intimacy in India. For example, Jonathan Parry's article (2001) contrasting the marriage of a Dalit[12] illiterate father with that of his middle class educated daughter has received much attention. Parry argues that the daughter has a more 'companionate' view of marriage than her father:

> "A new companionate ideology makes the conjugal bond the object of much greater emotional investment. No longer merely a matter of the satisfactory discharge of marital duties, it is increasingly seen as a union between two intimate selves and carries a much heavier emotional freight" (Parry 2001:312).

In interpreting the daughter's story of her marriage and her expression of love for her husband Parry concludes that "Professor Giddens is right" (2001:316). For Parry her story is evidence of a

[12] Dalit refers to a member of the 'untouchable' caste.

'global' transformation of intimacy. But he notes that in India 'companionate marriage' is associated with greater marital stability rather than relationship dissolubility.

Based on their research in Kerala South India, Osella and Osella (2006) are more sceptical about apparent moves toward globalised contemporary forms of marriage and intimacy. They highlight those marriages which go *against* the trend of companionate marriage and which embrace a more gender segregated set of relationships amongst kin and friends. These more 'traditional' relationships, they argue, do not necessarily entail less equality or less intimacy. On the contrary they argue that 'modern intimacy' signifies a "more strictured and rigidly policed self living within the confines of a family structured by a neo-patriarchal hegemony" (Osella and Osella 2006:3). They critique the idea that 'modern' or 'western' marriages are necessarily freer and question the 'naturalness' of love marriage.[13]

Research in other Asian countries has also critiqued the wholesale adoption of theories of modern intimacy. Jackson *et al* warn scholars "not to assume that Eastern nations are simply 'catching up' with their western counterparts, or that social trends similar to those in the West confirm that late modernity has the same consequences in all parts of the world" (Jackson *et al.* 2008:3). They cite work which shows that East Asian men and women are creating new forms of relationships which hold little resemblance to the so-called 'pure relationship'. This literature also suggests that unproblemetised categories such as 'traditional' and 'modern' may be misleading. To some extent this terminology presupposes further homogeneity, or a fixed endpoint to which all cultures are progressing. But as Jackson *et al* (2008) point out, we should not assume that western culture is the yardstick by which to measure the modernization of non-western cultures. They urge researchers to remain open to the possibility of 'multiple modernities' in interpreting informants' narratives around relationships and marriage (Jackson *et al.* 2010).

One of my objectives in this thesis will be to explore the relevance of some of Giddens's hypotheses amongst my informants in the UK and India. To what degree are young Indians drawn to the ideology of the 'pure relationship' and how does this impact on their relationship practices? These are central themes of this thesis.

### 2.12 Sexuality

I take sexuality to encompass, amongst other things, sexual behaviour, gender roles, relationships, and the personal, social and cultural meanings that people attach to these (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002:1). I am concerned with "what people know and believe about sex,

[13] 'Love marriage' here primarily refers to marriage with a spouse chosen by the couple and without permission or involvement from parents or family. In Chapters Eight and Nine I will describe in detail my informants' understandings of this term which was slightly different in Baroda and London.

particularly what they think is natural, proper and desirable" (Holland *et al.* 1998:41). Like love, sexuality is understood as a cultural construct, shaped by specific historical contexts within different communities and social groups (Foucault 1978; Caplan 1987; Weeks 1986). The meanings and practices associated with sexuality differ with age (West 1999), social class (Savara and Sridhar 1994; Wight 1994) and gender (Holland *et al.* 1992; Vance 1984). The latter is described in further detail below.

Sexuality in this thesis is explored as a "practice of intimacy" (Jamieson 2005). While sexuality can be studied quite apart from affect, indeed I show below that it has primarily been studied in that way, in this thesis I am interested in how understandings of love and intimacy are interconnected with sexual behaviour and desire. As de Munck noted:

> "The relationship between romantic love and sexual practices is problematic and variable both within and between cultures. What is not problematic is that there is a relationship between the two, even if that relationship is one that prohibits sexual contact between lovers or love between sexual partners." (de Munck 1998:viii)

The inter-relationship between ideologies of love and sexuality has only recently received attention. For example, Wardlow, Hirsch, and Sobo have studied how an attachment to ideals of romantic love impacts on sexual risk-taking (Wardlow 2007; Hirsch *et al.* 2007; Sobo 1998). Such studies show the cultural variability of the relationship between love and sex and how global ideologies of love are interpreted alongside local constructions of relationships and sexuality.

### 2.13 Gender

As is well established now, gender is not the same as sex; 'sex' has been used to refer to the biological differences that exist between males and females while gender refers to the cultural norms and expectations which different cultures invoke when speaking about men and women.[14] Often 'gender' is studied in relation to women, but it is important to remember that masculinity is a construct too that affects both men and women's ability to achieve equality (Wilton 1997; Holland *et al.* 1998). Ortner and Whitehead write "What gender is, what men and women are, what sorts of relations do or should obtain between them – all of these notions do not simply reflect or elaborate upon biological 'givens', but are largely products of social and cultural processes" (Ortner and Whitehead 1981:1). As a result, Rosaldo notes, "Gender in all human groups must, then, be understood in political and social terms, with reference not to biological constraints but instead to local and specific forms of social relationship and, in particular, of social inequality" (Rosaldo 1980:400). Thus gender too differs by context. Furthermore, it is particularly important to study gender in studies around ethnicity and culture since changes in cultural identity are often

[14] Some feminists however, have argued that sex is also a socioculturally constructed concept, pointing to the existence of intersex individuals with ambiguous genitalia and/or genetic coding. See for example (Bing and Bergvall 1996)

denoted by reconstructions of gender (Kurien 2002). Gender is often taken to denote changes in or continued maintenance of 'tradition' and culture.

Connell (1987) writes that a study of gender should focus on three aspects: cathexis, labour, and power. Cathexis refers to feelings and emotional expectations within a relationship; labour to who does what work in the home; and power to who makes decisions and has control of the family's resources. In examining relationships between young men and women in the UK and India, I employ this framework. Studies exploring labour and power are arguably more common, but "to think about couples only in terms of power … is to miss the fact that men and women may also care for conjugal partners with whom they are simultaneously involved in daily battles over bodies, power and resources" (Wardlow and Hirsch 2006:3). I intend to focus then not just on the battles and power dynamics between the sexes, but also how couples strive to create relationships of intimacy and equality (if they do) and to explore whether 'modern intimacy' really entails any change in women's autonomy and power.

Gender and sexuality are related but distinct categories (Rosaldo and Lamphere 1974; Rubin 1984; Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Gender is often studied without reference to sexuality (e.g. Caplan 1985). Sexuality, involving relationships between gendered bodies, is more difficult to study without reference to gender (Pringle 1992). Gender stereotypes and expectations around gendered roles in sex are crucial to understanding sexuality and sexual behaviour of young people around the world (Marston and King 2006). In India, as in many other cultures, gender socialization promotes male sexuality and encourages passivity in women (Das 1988; Dube 1988; Abraham 2002). As Vance comments, "for researchers in sexuality, the task is not only to study changes in the expression of sexual behaviour and attitudes, but to examine the relationship of these changes to more deeply-based shifts in how gender and sexuality were organized and interrelated within larger social relations" (Vance 1991:876). Understandings of gender can have profound effects on sexuality and need to be taken into account when studying sexual relationships.

### 2.14 Culture and ethnicity

In this thesis I will be using the term ethnicity over 'race' since broadly speaking ethnicity refers to the shared cultural and linguistic heritage of a group while 'race' is attributed via physical phenotype (Banks 1996).[15] The use of 'ethnicity' reinforces my interest in the perception of a shared cultural heritage amongst Gujarati men and women in the UK and India.[16] I take a 'non-essentialist' perspective to ethnicity recognizing that ethnicity and culture cannot capture

[15] Nonetheless, as biologists have shown there is little biological difference between races and definitions of 'race' have changed depending on social and historical circumstances. Thus race, like ethnicity, is a social construct (Banks 1996).
[16] See Banks (1996) for a useful discussion on the evolution of the terms 'ethnicity', 'race' and 'culture' in anthropology.

*everything* there is to know about a person (Bloch and Solomos 2010). Rather a non-essentialist perspective "encourages a consideration of when and why features are brought into the foreground in thinking about people." (Pfeffer 1998:1383). Such an approach is influenced by Barth's work on the 'boundary maintenance' of ethnicity (Barth 1969). Barth suggests that researchers pay attention to the way in which signifiers of ethnic identity are used as markers of difference. In this way ethnicity is viewed as fluid and contingent (Goulbourne and Solomos 2003). For example, Baumann's study of ethnicity in Southall London showed that people ascribe to various different cultural and ethnic labels depending on the context (Baumann 1996). Ascription of ethnicity may also come from outside groups; Sen argues that the current 'anti-Muslim' climate in Britain and the US, along with certain uses of language in the media which suggest a homogenous Muslim identity, has reified the very existence of a 'Muslim community' (Sen 2006).

There are multiple other aspects of a person's identity that can influence behaviour, such as age and sex, and the strength of ethnicity as a mediator for these is dependant upon other situational factors (Baumann 1996; Bloch and Solomos 2010). Not everyone within a cultural group will behave in the same way. In particular social class and gender will impact on an individual's ability to challenge or their willingness to support cultural ideologies. While I am interested in culture as an explanatory variable in understanding love and intimacy amongst young Gujaratis, it is important not to neglect the power of external-structural forces which can also shape behaviour and events (Farmer 1999; Cohen *et al.* 2000).

### 2.15 Transnational Research

A 'transnational' approach to research recognises that migrants and those in the 'sending community'[17] share a "coherent, although spatially dispersed, social field" (Hannerz 1998:240; see also Basch *et al.* 1994). There is no strict boundary between Gujaratis in the UK and Gujaratis in India and both will have access to global ideologies of, for example, love and romance. Aside from shared global media, in looking at second generation Gujaratis in the UK, the idea of a shared space and ongoing networks and connections between the 'sending' and 'receiving' community has had little relevance (see also Bryceson and Vuorela 2002; Levitt and Waters 2002). Many of my UK informants had never been to India and some had few if any connections with their relations who remained there. Furthermore, this transnational relationship is complicated by the fact that many Gujaratis came to Britain via East Africa; some report to have more connections with kin in Kenya than in India. Taking into account these limitations, I am nonetheless interested in what Dahinden refers to as "transnational subjectivity" (2009:1367) and how this impacts on relationship beliefs and practices. Transnational subjectivity refers to ongoing

[17] 'Sending community' refers to those who remain in India, 'receiving community' to those who have migrated or grown up abroad, in this case in Britain.

feelings of belonging to an Indian or Gujarati identity, despite the lack of any concrete 'connection' with India. Gujaratis in India may also feel that they 'belong' to the community of Indians living abroad – the Non Resident Indians[18] (NRIs). As has been recognized by researchers in India, ideals of modernity and consumerism are influenced by the culture of returning NRIs. NRIs are part of the 'imagined' community of India and their fashion and possessions have become a reference point for the Indian elite (Shah 1987 quoted in Lakha 1999). The transnational approach signifies an interest in both contexts, recognizing that influence travels both ways. This approach ensures that both the culture of the 'sending' and the 'receiving' community are viewed as dynamic.

## *2.2 Empirical Literature*

In the following section I will review the empirical literature relating to intimacy and relationships from India and the UK. This can be broadly split into research exploring marriage and research exploring sexuality. Much of the latter literature focuses on sexual behaviour as it springs from public health journals or non-governmental organisation reports. This literature takes a specific angle in studying sexuality which does not directly address the primary focus of my research – love and marriage – but it is part of what constitutes 'intimacy' and helps to situate this thesis within the broader framework of the literature. I conclude with details of the gaps in the literature and how this study attempts to address them.

### 2.21 Literature from India

*Caste, class, and marriage*

There are four main categories of caste *(varna)*. In order of hierarchy these are: Brahmans (teachers, scholars and priests), Kshatrivas (kings and warriors), Vaishyas (agriculturists and traders), and Sudras (artisans, service providers). There are also those considered 'outcaste', referred to as 'untouchables' or Dalits.[19] As indicated, each group represents an occupational specialisation. The 'role' of the Dalits is perceived to be menial and polluting work related to bodily decay and dirt. Brahmans, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are referred to as 'twice born'[20] and are considered closer to God than Sudras, and certainly closer than Dalits. There has been a long history of discrimination against Sudras and especially Dalits. This discrimination is on-going despite India's constitution forbidding prejudice on the basis of caste.

[18] 'Non Resident Indian' is a term coined by the Indian state referring to those of Indian descent who live abroad. Breckenridge argues this was to encourage 'nationals' abroad to invest in India (Breckenridge 1995).
[19] The lowest castes are officially classified as Scheduled Castes. In 1990, following the Mandal Commission's recommendation, the category of Other Backward Classes (OBC) was also introduced. Other Backward Classes are defined as socially and educationally backward but do not qualify as 'untouchables'.
[20] 'Twice born' means they have undergone the sacred thread ceremony (*Upanayan*), in which male members are initiated into the second stage of life (*ashrama*) of a Vedic follower. This sacred thread ceremony is considered to be a type of second birth (New World Encyclopedia 2008, April 2).

Within each of the caste groupings there are thousands of subcastes, normally related to geographical groupings. Different castes have different marriage ceremonies and traditions. Some castes allow the remarriage of widows, others do not. Some castes have traditionally preferred prepubescent marriage, while others do not. Some castes practice 'primary' and 'secondary' marriage, while others believe in the indissolubility of marriage (see Dumont 1980:111). An important feature of caste is that only those from the same caste should marry one another (endogamy). As Dumont (1980) argues, the very existence of caste groupings is reinforced by the practice of endogamy.

Since economic liberalisation, however, class has become increasingly important as a means of social categorisation and status attainment (Beteille 1996; Desai 2008). In addition, there has been a recognition that with economic liberalisation a 'new middle class' has been formed which shares both occupational and cultural similarities (Fernandes 2000; 2006). In particular, the new middle classes have been associated with a forward looking globalised India (Fernandes 2000; 2006). But members of higher-ranking castes tend to be wealthier than members of lower-ranking castes (Heitzman and Worden 1995) and the urban middle classes are "disproportionately" drawn from the upper castes, showing the continued overlapping of caste and class (Deshpande 2003:116-20, 146; Fernandes 2006:104-6). In addition, middle class lifestyle is thought to be influenced by upper caste ideology; Donner states that, "An upper-caste bias in the self-definition of middle class behaviour and lifestyles does very significantly shape gender ideologies, which incorporate high-caste ideals of chastity and marriage." (Donner 2008:55).

But since the new middle classes are associated with 'modernisation', we might expect that ideals and traditions around marriage might be changing. Indeed the key debates on the meaning of a middle class Indian life centre on issues around modernity, gender, and marriage (Donner 2008). In this thesis I am primarily concerned with these emerging debates about appropriate middle class marriage. Thus in the following sections I draw mainly on literature as it pertains to the middle classes in India, as opposed to 'Gujarati' literature, or more caste specific literature.[21]

*Middle class marriage in India*

There is a vast amount of Indian ethnographic literature, but research on middle class life and marriage is only recently beginning to emerge (Fuller and Narasimhan 2008). To some extent this may be explained by a recent increase in the size of the middle classes since economic liberalization. Studies which explore marriage tend to concentrate on arranged marriage at the exclusion of other forms, such as love marriage. For example, both Vatuk (1972) and Upadhya and Vasavi (2006) report cases of intercaste and love marriages amongst middle class migrants

[21] In Chapters Four and Five I give more details on how I define 'middle class', along with the caste backgrounds of my informants.

in North India and IT workers but their ethnographies focus solely on arranged marriage. Mody, who conducted an ethnography of love marriage couples in a New Delhi court, postulates that scholars ignore instances of love marriage due to the idea that love marriages are "necessarily illegitimate, unusual and the westernised practice of an urban deracinated elite" (Mody 2002:1). This has resulted in anthropologists ignoring new and changing marital forms.

Apart from ceremonial traditions or particularities (which are beyond the focus of this thesis), there are reported broad similarities across middle class marriage (Fuller and Narasimhan 2008). In particular there is a strong preference for arranged marriage (*ibid*.). In arranged marriage the parents and family are responsible for finding a suitable spouse for their son or daughter. When arranging a marriage the caste, economic status, family reputation, and general character of the bride or groom's family are taken into account. In more educated urban families young couples can usually meet two or three times before making a decision. More choice given to young people reflects the growing importance placed on intimacy as a criterion for spouse selection (Fuller and Narasimhan 2008; Srivastava 2007). In addition, some studies have noted a widening of caste boundaries amongst the middle classes so that some inter-caste marriage is permissible (Pache Huber 2004; Corwin 1977; Donner 2002). Corwin (1977) argues that these inter-caste marriages are only tolerated when they fit within the local social ranking, i.e. only those of a similar status can marry one another. On the whole though the literature points to a preference for a parentally arranged marriage within the same caste or sub-caste group. The ensuing marriage is then understood as an alliance between two families rather than just the couple (Rao and Rao 1982). The practice of bride dowry is still prevalent, despite a law passed in 1961 which banned the practice (Bradley and Tomalin 2009).

There is some evidence that middle class Indians are becoming more accepting of love marriage. Donner conducted an ethnographic study amongst middle class women in a neighbourhood in Calcutta, India. She found that some middle class parents in Calcutta were willing to accept a love marriage if the couple come from the same caste, and they will celebrate it in a similar fashion to a 'normal' arranged marriage (Donner 2002). Other researchers have found that such marriages initiated by the couple are likely to be disguised as an arranged marriage to peers (Mody 2006) or that there is little or no celebration of the marriage (Caplan 1984). Parents are not just concerned with their reputation (although that matters too); they prefer arranged marriage since the "unpredictability of emotions and the insecurity of a match based on attraction rather than careful choice by experienced elders" does not bode well for the future of a relationship (Donner 2002:87).[22] This suggests that there is some ambivalence towards a marriage initiated

[22] A concern often expressed to me in Gujarat about the instability of my marriage and the likelihood of divorce in the 'West'. See also (Parry 2001)

by young people and perhaps some signs that parents are increasingly unable to demand that their sons and daughters marry someone exclusively of the parents' choosing.

*Non-marital relationships in India*

Non-marital relationships have been less explored, possibly due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Osella and Osella (2006), who have conducted extensive research in rural Kerala, describe non-marital relationships amongst their informants as 'doomed romances'. They describe how young couples there do not expect their self-initiated relationships to last and "have no intention of going against parental wishes and trying to transform the relationship into something more permanent" (2006:113). They found that these relationships were unlikely to be consummated, although they may last for years. In rural Gujarat, a study looking at sexually active unmarried women concluded that women enter into relationships before marriage because they see "the period between menses and marriage as the only opportunity for self-determination, affection, and control through a relationship with a boy" (Mehta *et al.* 2004:91). These young girls described a life after marriage filled with familial responsibility and seemed to have few expectations of a more 'companionate marriage'. The authors suggest that there is more at stake than just romance for these women, that perhaps these premarital relationships signify independence and choice to women with little autonomy in their lives. But in other contexts young people do hope to marry their boyfriend or girlfriend. For example, Abraham in Mumbai found there were two kinds of relationships amongst her college-going informants; 'time pass', a short term relationship associated with sexual intimacy, and 'pure love', a foreground to marriage (Abraham 2002). These divergent accounts highlight the importance of place and class in determining relationship trajectories in India.

*'Companionate marriage' in India*

There seems to be a general consensus that young middle class Indians are increasingly seeing love "as a necessary predisposition for a match" (Donner 2002:86). Jonathan Parry, mentioned above, has illustrated this transition through comparing the marriage of a Dalit illiterate man and that of his educated middle class daughter. Parry (2001) describes how the father, now with his fourth wife, speaks "indifferently" about how he came to lose his previous wives – the first he didn't like, the second ran away and the third was a 'witch'. Parry observes that for the father, marriage is "an institutional arrangement for the bearing and raising of children" (2001:815). In contrast, for his well-educated daughter marriage "carries a much heavier emotional freight" (2001:816). Parry cites Giddens's transformation of intimacy thesis in understanding the apparent changes in marriage practices between father and daughter. He says,

> "Not just in Islington, but the wide world over, personal life is undergoing a revolutionary transformation in the direction of a new ideological stress on intimacy, on the quality and

equality of the relationship between the couple, and hence on the possibility of de-coupling when that relationship is no longer fulfilling (cf. Giddens 1992)" (Parry 2001:784).

Parry argues that the younger generation are less pragmatic, caring less about their spouse's education and occupation and caring more about the intimate bond that they share. However, it is interesting to note that though the daughter referred to in Parry's article spoke eloquently of her affectionate ties to her new husband, she also chose to marry someone who was materially much better off.[23]

Fuller and Narasimhan (2008) also argue that young people prefer a 'companionate marriage'. They conducted ethnographic fieldwork amongst middle class Brahmans in Tamil Nadu. Young people in their study expected intimacy and love within arranged marriages, but also put a high importance on the caste, education and occupation of the potential spouse. The informants' behaviour seems to be inconsistent with the authors' previous definition of companionate marriage – one that prioritizes love over status concerns. Fuller and Narasimhan, however, disregard the status concerns of young couples as a search for something "in common". They argue that a search for a spouse of similar background is common in western marriages and conclude that modern Indian marriages are like 'western marriages', and can therefore justifiably be defined as 'companionate' (2008:752). The problem with this argument is that 'western marriage' is assumed to be the archetypal companionate marriage to which Indian marriages need to be compared. A more fruitful argument might question the very concept of 'companionate marriage' in the first place.

As de Munck has noted, there is an 'arranged aspect' to western marriage which is generally overlooked (de Munck 1998) and under appreciated by Giddens. Marriage in the 'West' and marriage in the 'East' are too often contrasted as if the former were totally based on love and free will and the latter on the constraints imposed by families. While western societies do emphasise love matches, it does not mean that love is absent from more so called 'collectivist societies'. De Munck's research in Sri Lanka showed that love, while not *emphasised* in arranged marriage, is taken into account and can sometimes be used as a reason to arrange a marriage (de Munck 1998). Equally in the West, de Munck argues, the person "we choose to fall in love with is largely determined by cultural institutions and socialisation practices" (de Munck 1998:286). That is, marriage as an institution in both contexts can be seen as a means to propagate class (and caste) boundaries.

Even in 'love marriages' there is evidence that love is not the only motivation. For example, Mody (2008) observed that love marriage couples in Delhi speak of love, but also explain their choice of

[23] A similar observation was made by Osella and Osella (2006).

spouse by referring to more 'traditional' criteria of a good match, such as education and occupation. In addition, the discourse of love has been shown in a range of 'non-western' contexts to be used by individuals in laying claim to a 'modern' identity (Wardlow and Hirsch 2006:14). Wardlow and Hirsch argue that individuals strategically use concepts of love and romance in their endeavour to craft "a more modern gendered self' (Wardlow and Hirsch 2006:8). Similarly in Nepal, Laura Ahearn's ethnography of love letters showed that young people use love as a means to connect to a development discourse of progress and modernity (Ahearn 2001). Ahearn argues that the idea of love gives the villagers a sense of agency in their lives, connecting them to 'Western' notions of success and consumption (Ahearn 2001:49). Thus there are signs that while marriage is increasingly spoken of in terms of love, this love may represent more than simply a concern for more intimacy in marriage.

How does love and intimacy impact on sexuality and sexual practices? Studies looking at love in India have done so through the lens of marriage, either arranged or 'love', but have rarely touched upon sexuality or desire. Studies that look at sexuality have likewise avoided looking at love.[24] This is interesting considering the enthusiasm for Giddens's 'pure relationship', of which erotic satisfaction is a key element (Giddens 1992).

*Sexuality and Gender*

Studies which explicitly examine the relationship between sexuality and gender have emphasised how the patriarchal nature of Indian society contributes to sexual inequality and limits women's power to exercise control over their bodies. Researchers have noted that control over women's sexuality is exercised through restrictions on their dress, mobility, knowledge of sex and through encouraging feelings of shame regarding the body and sexuality (George 2002; Puri 1999; Khan et al. 2002). Women (not men) risk a lot when they engage in sexual activity outside of marriage. One study suggested that men have used this knowledge to blackmail girls into continuing a sexual relationship with them and sometimes into having sex with their friends (Sodhi 2000). Some boys view coercive and forced sex as desirable and pleasurable (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002). Osella and Osella (1998), however, in their research in Kerala found that young men also seek a more romantic relationship and it may be that the socially prevalent 'macho' image has led some male respondents to overstate 'masculine prowess' with an interviewer. They have also observed some men suffering social disapprobation due to their premarital affairs (Osella and Osella 2006:133).

Studies which report sexual agency or pleasure amongst Indian women are rare. Some studies of older married couples report enjoyable sexual relations with evidence that these women used

[24] A noteworthy exception is Reddy's study (2006) on transexual Hijras in South India. She found that in the Hijras' construction of relationships, emotional intimacy is separated from corporeal desire.

non-verbal strategies to initiate sex (e.g. Joshi *et al.* 2001). Meanwhile Puri's study of middle and upper-middle class women in Mumbai and New Delhi found that the women she interviewed invoked a nationally defined notion of sexual respectability in which premarital chastity and innocence is compulsory, but they also drew on 'transnational' discourses of erotic love permitting sexual relations before marriage in some cases (Puri 1999:116). This stresses the need to consider the 'life cycle' and class / context in any understanding of sexuality and relationships between men and women in India.

*Sexuality: anthropological perspective*

Anthropological texts on Indian sexuality suggest that fear and restraint are the basic organising mechanisms of Indian male sexuality. These studies, many of which draw on Freudian psychoanalysis, have pathologised Indian men's sexuality, suggesting that Indian men are scared of women and sex (e.g. Caldwell 1999; Kakar 1990)[25] and fear the loss of semen (Kakar 1990). Osella and Osella (2006) have argued that 'semen loss anxiety' and 'fear of sex' have been overstated. They show the importance of discourses on 'body heat' in understanding sexuality. Both men and women have 'heat' or desire, which is especially strong amongst virgin girls after menarche. This has contributed, they argue, to men's fear around the first night spent with a wife and his ability to satisfy her desire – but just this night (2006:137). The concentration in the literature on discourses of fear and restraint is due to an over-reliance on religious texts in understanding Indian sexuality (Srivastava 2007)[26]. To what degree these texts are relevant to young contemporary Indians is questionable. As Srivastava argues, "It is important to distinguish between normative rules of sexuality and those practices and beliefs that are contingent: a flux dictated by the overwhelming circumstances of social and cultural processes" (Srivastava 2007:7). That is, 'rules' of behaviour inscribed in religious or other texts should be interpreted with caution. His own ethnographic work shows, contrary to the above literature, that sex is a legitimate arena of pleasure in urban India.

*Sexuality: public health perspective*

Another body of research on sexuality in India comes from public health literature. This literature has tended to focus on sexual behaviour or specific sexual acts which relate to public health outcomes, such as unprotected sex. Many studies report number of partners, knowledge of safe sex practices, and condom use (e.g. Khan *et al.* 2005; Mehta *et al.* 2004). These studies tend to concentrate on 'risky' groups, i.e. those that are most likely to become infected by sexually

[25] There has also been a recent rise in literature which explores Ghandi's influence on promoting sexual restraint (Alter 2000; Lal 1999).
[26] On the other hand there has been some interest in the *Kamasutra* as a text which reveals a liberal sexuality purported to have existed in the past, now repressed (cf. Foucault 1978).

transmitted infections, such as young people[27], truck drivers and sex workers. Estimated rates of premarital sexual behaviour, of most concern to public health officials, vary considerably. For example, studies of young men from Gujarat found rates ranging from 9% (Sharma and Sharma 1995; in Jejeebhoy 1996) to 91% (Joshi *et al.* 2001). Lower rates of around 10% are generally recorded for women, with an assumption of under reporting (Jejeebhoy 1998).

For public health studies marriage poses a 'risk' of infection for women; unequal gender power relations are thought to compromise women's power to negotiate contraception use and their husbands' previous unprotected sex with sex workers and/or multiple partners puts them at risk of sexual ill-health (Jejeebhoy 1998; Gangakhedkar *et al.* 1997). Some studies have shown that married men have more sexual encounters with sex workers than unmarried men (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002). Women in these studies report frightening and sometimes violent early marital sexual experiences, owing to their ignorance of sexual relations (George 2002; Joshi et al. 2001; Khan et al. 2005). Disappointingly, these studies tend to conclude that interventions to empower women are the key to improving sexual relations and health. For example, Gangakhedkar *et al*'s (1997) study which found that the majority of women coming to a sexual health clinic not involved in sex work are infected by their partners. The authors rather bizarrely conclude that women must be targeted before marriage for sex education while there is no mention of their husbands who visit the sex workers and put their wives at risk.

While these studies are important, it is unlikely that they represent the full scope of sexuality and sexual experience in India. Given the starting point of 'health' and 'risk' as a means to study sexual behaviour, few studies explore or were able to tap into couples' goals of intimacy. Many also specifically target 'at risk' or socially disadvantaged groups, and the emphasis appears to be on men's active aggressive sexuality and women's passivity. Thomas and Cole assert that a similar neglect of love in public health HIV/AIDS studies in Africa is due to an emphasis on highlighting the importance of structural violence in the spread of sexually transmitted infections (Thomas and Cole 2009:9). This may be the case in India too but it has resulted in a neglect of emotions and instances of agency and cooperation amongst couples.

### 2.22 Literature from the UK

*South Asians in Britain*

As outlined in the introduction, Gujaratis have a long history of immigration into Britain. Early studies on Indians were concerned with how migrants could assimilate, such as Rashmi Desai's (1963) 'Indian immigrants in Britain'. Studies at this time were preoccupied with how and if the mostly male migrants would take on the 'modern' values of the British, discarding their 'traditional'

[27] Young people (WHO definition: 15-25 years of age) in India account for 50% of all new sexually transmitted infections (UNAIDS 1999)

and ‘backward’ views as they interacted more with British society (Banks 1996; Kearney 1986). In the 1970s after the Kenyan and Ugandan ‘Africanisation’ many more Indians arrived into Britain, a large proportion of whom were Gujarati. This time they arrived with whole families. These experiences of migration, along with their previous economic success in East Africa, have been used to explain the relative economic success of Indians in Britain (see Modood 1992; Ramji 2006).

Academic interest in ‘assimilation’ dissipated as researchers became disillusioned with modernisation theory. Nonetheless, as scholars began to study second generation Indians (those born and/or brought up in the UK) they tended to characterise the Indian culture of the first generation as ‘traditional’ and British culture as ‘modern’. For example, if we look at studies around marriage, the main objective of researchers is to understand the second generation’s perspectives and preferences for a ‘modern’ love or ‘traditional’ arranged marriage, accentuating the dichotomy between these two marriage types. Both Ballard and Brah, for example, found that their respondents had a preference for love marriage but were not willing to reject arranged marriage (Ballard 1977; Brah 1977). Many of these studies seem to anticipate a ‘conflict of cultures’ between the first-generation parents and the second generation children (e.g. Anwar 1976; Ballard 1977; 1979; 1998). They assumed that the first generation parents would, in line with their cultural traditions, prefer arranged marriage and that the second generation, educated in English schools and surrounded by ideals of individualism and love and romance, would prefer a love marriage. According to this line of argument, the second generation are then left in a state of confusion and angst. For example, Ballard and Ballard wrote of second generation Punjabis:

> “These young people have been exposed to socialisation in two different cultures, at home and at school. The crucial questions are firstly, how successfully are they managing to resolve the contradictions between these two cultures and, second, whether and in what form are they sustaining their Punjabi ethnicity.” (Ballard and Ballard 1977:43)

This ‘culture clash’ model has been critiqued for its portrayal of the second generation as being ‘lost between two cultures’.

Those that follow the ‘culture clash’ model have a tendency to stereotype South Asian[28] culture as repressive and British culture as liberating. For example, Bhopal’s study (1999) with 60 second generation women from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh compared opinions on marriage between those who had a university education and those who did not. She found that all of the respondents who had a university education thought arranged marriage was a degrading form of patriarchal control. Less educated women were more 'traditional' in their views; these women felt that women who have a love marriage are selfish, choosing their partner ‘only’ for sexual desire

[28] Much literature in Britain tends to group together participants from South Asian countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka).

(Bhopal 1999).[29] Unfortunately the study explored little of what actually happens within the relationships, including the gender roles of arranged versus non-arranged married couples, leaving the reader with an unfounded assumption that arranged marriages are necessarily less equitable. Furthermore, as Ahmad points out, Bhopal seems to imply that "South Asian family structures and gender relationships are inherently oppressive, and suggests that individual 'agency' can only be exercised once the subject has consciously dissented from the familial and cultural group... Bhopal's analysis would indicate that to be 'successful', South Asian women have little option but to 'turn their backs on religion and culture" (Ahmad 2003:58).

Such assumptions around intergenerational culture clash both pathologise Asian youth and generationally fragment Asian communities (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies 1982; Alexander 2004). Brah (1996:40-43) elucidates some of the problems with the 'between two cultures' mode of analysis.[30] First there is no evidence to support the depiction of young Asians as being 'between two cultures'. While some may encounter conflicts with their parents, this does not explain the experiences of all, or even the majority, of young British South Asians. Few studies have systematically compared the first and second generation, but those that have, have found instances of both conflict and negotiation (e.g. Raj 2003). Furthermore, studies on Asians in Britain have tended to emphasise the differences rather than the similarities between white and Asian Britons. In fact, Brah argues, the focus on the 'culture clash' model, reifies the existence of one 'Asian' and one 'British' culture, ignoring differences in class, age, education, gender, and so on. The stress on 'culture clash' rejects the possibility of "cultural interaction and fusion" (1996:41). Brah suggests that it's more useful to imagine "intergenerational difference" rather than "intergenerational conflict" (1996:42).

*British Asian (arranged) marriage*

While there has been some recent literature which recognises other forms of marriage beyond the love-arranged dichotomy, the bulk of the literature on South Asian marriage in the UK focuses on 'traditional' arranged marriages. The tendency to concentrate on arranged marriage may be due to changes over time, but it is also true that within these studies the ceremonies and rituals of arrangement are given chief attention. Gell argues that the "marriage ceremonial is especially attractive as a theme as it enables anthropologists to advance views about the timeless essences of non-western cultures" (Gell 1994:356). That is, an anthropological romanticism has shaped research on Indians in the UK, encouraging the essentialisation of Indian communities and a concentration on 'difference'.

[29] This was the only study which seemed to make the connection between marriage and sexuality (albeit tangentially). These responses suggest that sexual desire is a lesser criterion for the selection of a future spouse – a point I will return to later.

[30] Also outlined in (Prinjha 1999)

Ballard (1977), Michaelson (1983) and Bhachu (1985), for example, all focus on arranged alliances. Ballard looks briefly at how arranged marriages among British Sikhs in Leeds are set up – the role of the go-between, the initial introduction, the pre-marriage, wedding and post marriage ceremonies and dowry. Michaelson describes the marriage rules, preferences and practices of Lohana and Oshwal castes, while Bhachu focuses on the marriage arrangements of East African Ramgarhia Sikhs, the rules, preferences, procedures of accepting and rejecting potential matches and the dowry system. While scholars have acknowledged that South Asian marriage ranges from 'traditional' arranged marriage to 'love marriage', few have explored the full variety, and (virtually) none have explored understandings of love and intimacy. Forms of marriage beyond 'arranged marriage' tend to be dismissed as deviant or outside the norm and are thus given little attention (cf. Prinjha 1999).

One result of this tendency to concentrate on formally arranged marriages (rather than, for example, introduced marriages) is that it ignores instances of social and cultural change or diversity within a cultural group, thereby fixing community or cultural identity. In the cases listed above, the concentration was on the unique aspects of these cultural groups. So for example, the East African identity of the Ramgarhia Sikhs in Southall was used to explain their particular cultural practices and ideologies (Bhachu 1985). The focus on community group culture can reinforce the "internal similarity and external difference" of ethnic minority groups (Alexander 2004:534). Sue Benson (1996) has argued that this perpetuates the anthropological stress on 'culture' without enough attention to 'structure'. A continued emphasis on community difference and particularity leaves little room for the agency of young couples to emerge, depicting them as 'slaves to their culture' (cf. Prinjha 1999). Any evidence of change is disregarded as "a moment of fracture and loss; a symbol of cultural dissolution and crisis" (Alexander 2004:534) rather than the normal process of change through which all cultures and communities must go through. This is of concern since, as Back has argued, the idea of 'natural' group identities and preferences plays to notions of irreconcilable difference between ethnic groups – thus fuelling the ideological base of right wing groups (Back 2002a, 2002b).

Recent studies have turned away from the 'culture clash' model and painted a more nuanced picture of the different kinds of marriage which British Indians engage in. These studies have described the kinds of negotiations that young Indians undergo with their parents when getting married. Of particular note is the 'introduced marriage': Introduced marriages have minimal parental involvement but parents approve the potential match before the couple meet (Raj 2003; Prinjha 1999). Other studies have shown that some young Indian people are 'arranging' their own marriage by using extended family members to broker marriage arrangements with their current

boy or girlfriend (Sinha *et al.* 2006). And there is some evidence that those who do follow a more formal arranged marriage process are skilled in negotiating their own preferences with those of their parents (Raj 2003). So while parents have particular criteria important to them for a future son or daughter-in-law, there is some evidence that young people also look out for their own priorities.

*Intimacy, sexuality, and gender*

The tendency to focus on arranged marriage explains to some extent the lack of literature on love or intimacy. There has been some recognition of the importance of love after marriage (see Ballard 1979) and some scholars have identified an increased emphasis on the 'personal' qualities of a potential spouse (e.g. Bhachu 1985). Bhachu argues the increased emphasis on the 'personal' qualities of the spouse reflects young people's expectation of living in a nuclear household with their future spouse. More recent studies have noted an emphasis on love and intimacy amongst young Indians in Britain and describe the ways in which young men and women attempt to negotiate their love choice with their parents' preferences (Prinjha 1999; Raj 2003).

But there is little or no discussion of the practices of intimacy, sexual or otherwise, even in the public health literature. Unlike in India, where the last twenty years have seen a burgeoning body of sexuality studies, there has been very little attention given to the sexuality and sexual behaviour of Indians or other South Asians in the UK. Studies in sexual behaviour in the UK have been led by a concern to reduce teenage pregnancy,[31] propelled in part by the fact that the UK has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe (UNICEF 2001).[32] Lack of research then is most probably related to the 'unproblematic' sexual behaviour reported by British Asians; an analysis of data collected through the British National Survey of Sexual Attitudes and Lifestyles in 2000 showed that Indian (and Pakistani) men and women reported fewer sexual partnerships, later first intercourse and a lower prevalence of STIs than other ethnic groups (Fenton *et al.* 2005). Indian young women also have lower rates of teenage pregnancy than white British, black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women (Berthoud 2001).

Such low levels of reported sex before marriage may be due to a 'social desirability bias' amongst South Asian respondents (Fenton *et al.* 2005). The qualitative literature reports that few South Asian respondents engage in sexual activity while still in school, partly due to difficulties in meeting members of the opposite sex. Once they are in college, however, respondents reported

[31] Research is driven by the fact that teenage pregnancy is associated with higher levels of social deprivation (Moffitt and E-Risk Study team 2002) and by "an overwhelmingly negative social construction of teenage motherhood" (Phoenix 1993:74).

[32] As noted by Finlay (1996) research into teenage pregnancy and sexuality in the UK has neglected to include love or emotion in its analysis, due in part to the difficulties of engaging with emotions in health services / public health research.

feeling under pressure to 'catch up' with their white counterparts and engage in more sexual activity, many with non-Asians (Hennink *et al.* 1999; French *et al.* 2005) and older partners (Bradby and Williams 1999). This is thought to be due to the increased freedom which young South Asians experience in college – no longer having to explain to parents "why they were not at home by 3.30pm" (French *et al.* 2005:44). French *et al*'s study also found that although young Indian people are less sexually active than some other ethnic groups: "There was ample evidence that attitudes and behaviours are changing fast… Young Bangladeshi and Indian people were more likely than their parents to report sex before marriage" (French *et al.* 2005:iii). They also noticed a more 'affective' and romantic turn in young people's descriptions of relationships which they assumed was a departure from their parents' experiences of relationships. Nonetheless, while the majority of young Indians are thought to begin their sex lives in marriage (Fenton *et al.* 2005; French *et al.* 2005), I could find no study which explored sexuality *within* marriage.

On the other hand, Holland's study (1993) which looked at the sexuality and sexual behaviour of young people in Britain, including white English and South Asian, found that there is

> "considerable similarity in young women's experience of sexual encounters … [due to] the basic male oriented definition of heterosexual sex, the concomitant passive definition of female sexuality and the resulting subordinate position of women within sexual encounters and relationships" (1993:35-6).

But the double standard of men being able to have multiple partners – and women being labelled a 'slag' for the same – was particularly strong amongst ethnic minority groups (Holland 1993). This reminds us once again to be aware of the possible similarities between ethnic minority and white English young people, despite the temptation to over state difference in a study of culture and ethnicity.

One final aspect to note about studies on British Indians is that the vast majority focus on young women. The status of women and their relationships with men have often been used to represent 'progress' and are frequently cited as 'proof' of traditional or backward cultural beliefs (Sapiro 1993). As Alexander (2004) notes, there has been an ongoing trend in the UK of South Asian culture and communities being portrayed as implicitly patriarchal.[33] This can be seen in the media reports which sensationalise reports on forced marriage (often confusing it with arranged marriage) and women wearing the veil, using this as evidence of the 'backwardness' of South Asian, usually Muslim, culture.

[33] Alexander argues that this same theme continues in more recent studies on Asian men, depicting their masculinity as inherently negative and 'backward' (Alexander 2004).

## *2.3 Summary and gaps*

Arranged marriage procedures and rituals have been well described in India, but there is very little literature exploring other forms of marriage, including 'love marriage'. Likewise in the UK, literature focuses on formally arranged marriages, ignoring other forms which do not fit into that definition (Prinjha 1999). Gell (1994) argues that researchers working on ethnicity in Britain have focused on arranged marriage and in particular ceremonial events and rituals, to 'earn their salt' as *bona fide* anthropologists. Such a focus on arranged marriage emphasizes 'difference' and the particularity of 'Indian marriage', ignoring accounts of social change and diversity, as well as the agency of young Indian couples.

A few studies have, however, noted a more affective turn in marriage amongst young Indians (Donner Forthcoming; Parry 2001; Raj 2003). Some have referred to this as 'companionate marriage' and have used Giddens's theory of the 'transformation of intimacy' to understand these apparent changes (e.g. Parry 2001; Fuller and Narasimhan 2008). But such theories around the detraditionalisation of intimacy have been criticized, even in 'late modern' contexts for which they were originally developed (Gabb 2008; Jamieson 1998; 1999). This calls into question the applicability and relevance of these theories. Furthermore, Mody (2008) has shown that even amongst love marriage couples in India, love is not the only criterion couples use in choosing a spouse. Then changes that researchers have observed amongst middle class Indians should not be overstated, even as studies suggest that love is increasingly becoming the idiom within which marriages are formed. More investigation is needed into the meanings and motivations of young people who demand more participation in the selection of their future spouse.

Notwithstanding ethnographic studies on semen loss anxiety and restraint, the majority of studies exploring Indian sexuality have been driven by a public health concern over STI rates in India, and teenage pregnancy in the UK. While such research is no doubt important, it has not brought about an increased understanding of sexuality, what it means to people, and how it is affected by the social and cultural milieu in which it is constructed (Chandiramani et al. 2002). Furthermore, there has been an overwhelming concentration on relationships as an arena for battle over gender inequality, ignoring affective and pleasure goals that many couples may have.[34]

This thesis thus addresses the gap in literature on different and possibly changing forms of marriage amongst middle class Indians (in this case Gujaratis) in both India and the UK. I also explore sexuality as a part of intimacy and relationships, paying attention to both instances of pleasure and power. Finally, the thesis examines to what extent Giddens's and Beck and Beck-

[34] See Hirsch and Wardlow (2006) for similar comments on public health studies of sexuality and the implications for HIV prevention programmes.

Gernsheim's theories of modern intimacy are relevant to my informants – in particular to what extent a marriage which appears to be motivated by intimacy entails more equality. In the following chapter I outline the methods I have used to explore these issues.

# Chapter Three: Methods

The study presented in this thesis takes an ethnographic approach, with a constructivist grounded theory method to analysis. The ethnographic approach reflects my interest in culture and the 'insider's' emic perception of reality - that is how the study participants or 'informants' understand their lives (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983). But I also take care to examine the wider social context in which young people live; the inclusion of two groups of Gujaratis in two very different contexts permits an analysis of the cultural and contextual factors which shape love and intimacy (Padilla *et al.* 2007). The ethnographic approach, through its attention to detail and context, is the most suitable for my needs. It allows for an understanding of the cultural and contextual basis of the respondents' stories, without losing sight of the differences between individuals and the part each plays in shaping her/his life (Cornwell 1984: 204).

The principal method of data collection was through repeat in-depth interviews with two groups of young, married and unmarried Gujarati men and women. One group was brought up and living in Baroda, India and the other group was brought up in the UK. The use of in-depth interviews in ethnographic research on relationships is a common approach since love lends itself to the narration of romantic stories (see for example Rebhun 1999). Such a method is also appropriate for a study which touches on some potentially sensitive topics, such as secret relationships and sexuality. In addition to these interviews, I conducted participant and non-participant observation, and group discussions. These contextualised the narratives I collected, and created a broader understanding of courtship and gender in the two cities.

The grounded theory approach to analysis was used to complement the ethnographic research design. Grounded theory helps focus research through a continued back and forth conversation between data collection and analysis. Data are analysed simultaneously as they are collected; the analysis informs the data collection procedure, pointing to gaps and avenues for further investigation. This kind of analytical procedure helps to focus the ethnographic research, decreasing the possibility of the researcher getting 'lost in the data' (Charmaz 2006:23). It also helps in maintaining an 'outsider' observer perspective –so that the researcher does not become a complete participant (Charmaz 2006:22). Furthermore grounded theory, with its emphasis on the production of theory, helps the researcher link the emerging data with higher levels of abstraction. Timmermans and Tavory call the relationship between data collection and grounded theory analysis an "analytical choreography"*;* the deep immersion in the data and simultaneous theorising results in a conceptually dense thick description (2007:496). In this way, grounded theory 'grounds' the researcher in her goal of analytic abstraction.

I start the chapter with an overview of the data collection period in each field site – the 'fieldwork' I undertook in India and afterwards in the UK. I then go into more detail on the methodology. First I describe the sample selection and recruitment. I then describe each of the data collection methods I used and whether and how they differed in India and the UK. The grounded theory analysis procedures which I used are then explained and finally I consider the ethical implications of the study and how I have dealt with them.

## *3.1 Differences in fieldwork between Baroda, India and London, UK*

John Van Maanen said that the difference between sociological and anthropological ethnography was that the former was conducted in the 'West' and the latter in the 'rest' (Van Maanen 1988:21)[35]. If this is the case, I have conducted both types in this thesis - in London ('the West') and in Baroda ('the rest'). It is a simplistic dichotomy but it emphasises the potential differences of ethnography at 'home' and 'abroad'. As Van Maanen points out, an ethnographer working at home, as I was in London, can get in her car (or onto the tube) and 'commute' to work every day. While an ethnographer abroad is constantly observing and participating, in short living in the field. These distinctions, amongst others, led to two experiences of fieldwork which I have defined as 'immersive' in India and 'event-centred' in the UK.

My fieldwork in India followed more closely the pattern of typical anthropological fieldwork: I arrived in the fieldsite alone with a backpack and laptop and slowly found my way to a core group of informants and friends. Over eight months I learned how to negotiate Indian traffic, how to speak Gujarati, how to dress, and, to a certain extent, how to 'fit in'; I (hopefully) gradually decreased the cultural blunders for which anthropologists are so famously known. This fieldwork process is, as Henrike Donner describes,

> "A slow process of reorientation, in terms of language and routines, and bodily practices, ideas and values. Among the most tangible practices that emerge are those to do with movement and space – which lead towards an understanding of the ordering principles underlying certain behaviours and guide the immediate physical experience of place. Often the gradual acquisition of the skills necessary to act according to one's age, gender, class and racial aspiration takes considerable effort" (Donner 2008:15).

The experience of fieldwork in a foreign country is a visceral and all encompassing one. It is the work which migrants do as they acquire the skills to negotiate the norms of their new homes. Through participant observation, my field notes, and the grounded theory method of analysis, I used these experiences, interviews, and observations to inform my understanding of the lives of my informants.

[35] Van Maanen was paraphrasing Sahlins (Sahlins 1976).

In contrast fieldwork in London was more structured, less spontaneous, and more focused on pre-arranged interview encounters and particular events. This approach was used due to the nature of London as a city and my own relationship with it; London is my home, with my friends, family, and life already well established here. As Van Maanen predicted, each night after field work I returned home and some days I never even entered the 'field' – a term I grew increasingly uncomfortable with. In a large and multicultural city like London, it is not easy to locate the 'field'. British Indians make up approximately 2% of the UK population (Office of National Statistics 2007) and do not necessarily live in defined 'Indian' pockets; informants might work in one area, live in another, and socialise in several others. If I was in a bar and there was one Indian present (possibly a second generation Gujarati) was I 'in the field'? Of course the same problematics could have been applied in Baroda, but my experiences in London crystallised the ambiguity of 'field' and 'at home'.

As such I 'entered' the field in London through events and occasions with my informants. My interest in 'Gujarati culture' meant that my informants tended to only invite me to those events labelled as 'Asian' (or Indian or Gujarati). Thus I was invited to or found out about events such as university 'Asian' nights, Diwali[36] celebrations, matchmaking evenings and Asian speed dating parties. In these events and gatherings I needed to learn the norms of behaviour just as I did in India, so there were some similarities. But the experience was less intense and all-encompassing than my experiences in India, and so to some extent I was more reliant on interview data in the UK. These and other differences between the fieldwork in India and UK are elaborated on further below. In the section that follows, I outline the sampling and recruitment procedures.

### *3.2 Ethnographic and theoretical sampling of informants*

Ethnographers attempt to uncover the shared constructions and meanings of particular groups. For this study, I intend to explore Gujaratis' understandings of love and relationships. Clearly then I want to sample individuals who see themselves as belonging to this cultural group i.e. Gujaratis or people of Gujarati descent. In addition, my focus on meanings implies an attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of how people understand love and intimacy. Thus the goal is not to collect a statistically representative sample, to decipher what percentage do what, but rather "to speak to fewer people but in enough depth to elicit fine detail about this complex shared attribute" (Hirsch 1998:67).

[36] Diwali is a five day festival in Hinduism, Sikhism, and Jainism. It occurs between mid-October and mid-November and is popularly known as the *Festival of Lights*.

For example, social class and gender impact on people's ability to challenge or their willingness to support existing ideologies. The nature of ethnographic research means that the researcher does not start the data collection period with the full knowledge of all the relevant 'variables' pertinent to the study, rather they emerge during interactions and early research in the field (Barrett 1996). Furthermore, the grounded theory method calls for a *theoretical* approach to sampling, that is, on-going sampling throughout the data collection and analysis directed by evolving theories and concepts (Strauss 1987; Charmaz 2006). In theoretical sampling new informants are sought which could shed more light on the phenomenon. For example, where young people drank coffee and whether they drank alcohol and ate meat emerged as ways in which people identified themselves with 'modern' western culture. Therefore I sought out young people who behaved in these ways and others who did not. Also, Indians from India who had spent time in the UK spoke to me of their changing impressions of living with extended family and notions of personal choice and freedom, so I made sure to recruit people who had experienced living in the UK as well as away from home within India. In the UK, informants told me that where a person is brought up impacts on their views about marriage and relationships. For this reason I recruited men and women from 'Gujarati areas' (such as Leicester or Ealing in London), 'mixed ethnic areas' and 'white areas'.

Sometimes it was difficult to recruit a person who 'fit' into the sampling frame – in particular when I sought those who had been involved in potentially risky or taboo behaviours. In India I was keen to recruit individuals who drank alcohol[37] or who had had a relationship before marriage. Finding out whether people drank/smoked/had been in a relationship was not easy, as the following cases illustrate. Toni was a single 26 year old man who I recruited through a survey (see Table 3.1). On his recruitment form he wrote that he had never drunk alcohol but during the second interview he told me that he had drunk 'once or twice' and in the third interview that he drank 'socially' at parties. Another informant Milly, recruited through my guest house, told me when we first met that she had never been in a relationship and was solidly committed to the ideal of arranged marriage. After several weeks of midnight snacks and 'heart to heart' chats, it emerged that she was in a relationship with a married man. On the other hand in the UK, I had difficulties in recruiting people who had had an arranged or introduced marriage. As I shall discuss later, it emerged that some young people prefer to hide this aspect of their relationship which they feel signifies some kind of failure to find a partner in the 'normal way'.

I was also primarily interested in young people who were beginning to think about their future marriages or who had recently been married. The inclusion of both groups (unmarried and

[37] As mentioned in the introduction, Gujarat is officially a dry state.

recently married) allowed me to explore both expectations and early experiences of marriage.[38] Young Gujaratis between the ages of 20 and 30 then became my 'main informants' since this group included both married and unmarried men and women.[39] I also interviewed other people who I felt would help me understand issues around relationships, or who perhaps had some influence over young people and their relationship decisions. These included matchmakers[40], parents, university lecturers, priests, and doctors. I also encountered other young people who for various reasons did not ultimately become a 'main informant'. Together I refer to this group of individuals as 'periphery informants'.

My study also focuses on the experiences and ideals of the middle classes. Class was primarily self-assigned by informants but in order to 'locate' informants, I needed to be able to identify them. I did this by learning the markers of financial and cultural resources (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu and Passerson 1973) which are interpreted as indicators of 'middle class'. Cultural resources refer to the tastes, skills and preferences associated with a particular class; in India I learned the importance of clothes, 'societies'[41] where individuals lived and the ability to speak English, amongst other things. In England, I used the more standard markers of social class - education and parents' occupation. But 'middle class' is a very wide term[42] and within that broad category individuals will have varying levels of social capital and financial resources. Through observations and discussions with informants, I developed a more nuanced understanding of these. For example, in India I learnt which areas were the most expensive to live in and how having a car as opposed to a two-wheeler (motorbike or scooter) signified greater disposable income and independence (see also Lakha 1999). In this way I classified informants as 'upper middle', 'middle middle', and 'lower middle' to explore what impact these economic resources had on their relationship experiences (see Table 3.1). In Chapters Four and Five I discuss in more detail informants' understandings of identity and class.

The comparative element of the study also (obviously) required Gujaratis from India and the UK. In order to facilitate the sampling of informants of similar socio-demographic backgrounds from the two countries, I planned a 'matched' study. The intention was to recruit people in India who had a cousin or friend of a similar age in the UK (or vice versa). In this way I hoped that informants' cousins would also take part in the study. Since I was also interested in looking at

[38] It was not that I necessarily used 'marriage' or 'wanting to marry' as a category or term to recruit participants; I am fully aware that there are other kinds of relationships, such as co-habiting - some of my informants were co-habiting. But marriage as a goal appears to be pervasive in both India and the UK.
[39] In India informants commonly married in their mid-20s and in the UK in their late 20s. I use the term 'young' to distinguish them from their parents' generation.
[40] A matchmaker is usually an elder person who facilitates arranged marriages. S/he can charge for this service but many do it for free. In Appendix D there is a discussion and link to a short documentary film I made about a matchmaker in London.
[41] A 'society' is a private housing estate, very popular with the middle classes in Baroda.
[42] In India estimates reach as high as 250 million people belonging to this category (Sridharan 2004).

second generation Indians in the UK, this posed a further limitation on the people I could recruit in India (ones that had a cousin or friend that had been brought up in the UK). As I explain below, informants in the UK were reluctant to recommend 'cousins'[43] in India, and cousins of India-based informants were on the whole unwilling to take part. As such the 'matched' sampling design was only partially realised.

In thinking about how relevant my findings are to other Indians in the UK and India, I have tried to describe my informants in as much detail as room will allow. Chapters Four and Five are devoted to informants' understandings of their cultural and class identity. I have also included a brief description of each informant in those chapters.

In the following section I describe the recruitment procedures I went through in trying to create my sample of informants. While I was not seeking to create a randomly generated sample, it is important to minimise as far as possible the biases in the production of the sample that the researcher can introduce. For example, my previous connections with Baroda had played a strong role in the selection of Baroda as the Indian field site, but had I relied entirely on my connections there for the recruitment of informants, I may have ended up with an homogenous group which would only tell part of the story around the relationships of young people in Gujarat. It is important, therefore, to reflect on how as a researcher I affected the sample composition, both through my socio-cultural background and my own personal preferences. I do this below in the section on recruitment for each of the field sites.

### 3.2.1 Recruitment in Baroda

The main method of recruitment in India was through contacts I developed over the course of my stay. Since I was using participant observation, I was constantly meeting new people and telling them about the study. Through word of mouth I was introduced to several people who were eligible. I then arranged a one to one meeting to discuss the study in more depth, and at that stage I explained what topics would be covered in the interviews. If I had their email address, I emailed them the information leaflet before our first meeting (see Appendix B). No one who came to a one to one meeting refused to take part. I also recruited four informants through a survey I did during the Navratri festival in October. Navratri is a Gujarati Hindu festival of dancing for nine nights. I attended several '*garbas*' (where the dance is held) and conducted a survey in two large *garbas* (attendance of around 1000 in each). I deliberately selected two *garbas* renowned for the social class of their attendees; they were specifically for middle and upper class residents of Baroda, charging 1000 rupees (£14) entry fee to men.[44] The survey was in English but I

[43] 'Cousin' is a lose term in Gujarat used to refer to blood cousins, as in Britain but also family friends of similar age.
[44] Women enter free of charge to all *garbas*.

employed an assistant who translated it into Gujarati or Hindi for respondents. The main questions were around socialising and media, such as favourite movies and magazines or newspapers (Appendix B), but it was essentially a tool for recruitment rather than a method of data collection. At the end of the questionnaire I explained about the study and asked the respondent to leave their contact details if they were interested in taking part in an interview or group discussion. I surveyed 96 individuals, 71 left their contact details and nine of those were eligible (relations/friends born in the UK, between 20-30 years old). I then contacted eight[45] and invited them to meet me so I could tell them more about the study. Four ultimately took part and the other four kept cancelling or rearranging our meeting until I decided that they had changed their mind about taking part.

Apart from these four refusals, I had quite a lot of 'success' in recruitment. In particular, being a foreigner put me in a good position to recruit informants to the study; more than one person told me they took part because they wanted to speak with a foreigner. Some of my informants had never seen a foreign person in 'real life' before. They were interested in learning about me and about my impressions of India. They were also keen to talk about relationships, a topic that fascinated both young and old. In the end, I turned down quite a few people who wanted to take part either because they were too similar to others I had recruited or because they did not meet the criteria above – such as if they didn't have a cousin or friend in the UK.

These 'main informants' took part in at least three in-depth interviews. I also 'hung around' with some of these informants, or with others who I met during my participant observation. Many of my initial contacts were made with people from other parts of India and Gujarat who, like me, had a smaller network of friends and people to hang out with. This made it easier to meet them and strike up conversations in cafes or restaurants. I also tended to meet more affluent men and women who spoke good English. There was a small group of young foreigners working in NGOs and local companies who frequently threw parties well attended by the wealthy Gujarati elite. Since my language skills were quite poor, at least to start with, I found it easier to socialise with this group and felt less restricted in my behaviour. In order to counterbalance this I pushed myself to explore other means to meet people by joining a dance class and moving into a paying guest house. Perhaps ironically some of the informants who had more limited English became my closest friends and most involved informants; in part because these had the most to gain by practicing their English with me.

The latter point demonstrates the diverse range of relationships that evolve over the course of fieldwork. I 'hung out' and befriended some of my 'main informants', others I only ever saw within

[45] One left an incorrect number.

the context of the interviews. Conversely, some of my 'periphery informants' became my close friends; an older woman who had taught a 'marriage course' in a local college for 30 years and other young people who did not 'fit' the main sample criteria. For example, one man I met was keen to take part in the study, but was neither Gujarati (self-defined; his parents were from Kerala but he was brought up in Gujarat) nor had a cousin in the UK. Yet through spending time with him, socialising and attending different events, I learned a lot about youth culture in Baroda. Like many of my young friends he was unmarried. As emerged in the interviews married people have more restricted social lives, with a lot more work and family responsibility.

Despite the general enthusiasm for the study which I encountered, two married men refused to take part in interviews – Priya's husband was reportedly too shy and Lena's husband was too busy. Another couple, Hiren and Swati, never completed their third interview. I had met them quite late in the study and they told me they were unable to meet me for a third time when it came to my last week. It's hard to judge whether there was another reason for their dropping out. They initially seemed enthusiastic, but Hiren had some issue which he didn't want to share during the second interview. This may have been why they never had a third interview. The sensitivity of the third interview, which addresses sexuality, may also have deterred them from taking part.

Informants for group discussions were recruited via the survey mentioned above, through snow-balling and through advertisements in a local café.[46] These informants were all unmarried, came from middle class backgrounds, and did not necessarily have a cousin in the UK. In addition some were not of Gujarati parentage, though all had grown up in Baroda and spoke Gujarati. Sampling continued until saturation had been reached, i.e. until further sampling no longer added anything to the concepts emerging (Charmaz 2006).

### 3.2.2 Final sample of main informants in Baroda

I had a final sample of 18 main informants in India (Table 3.1), eight men and ten women. All of the informants had a university education except for Geet, who was also the only person who didn't work outside the home. The majority of the informants did not smoke or drink alcohol. All the informants were Hindu or Jain, except for Rekha who was Muslim. Hindu informants also all came from middle to high caste groups.[47] All self-defined as 'middle class', though as explained before I categorised informants further 'upper middle', 'middle middle' and 'lower middle'. The individual details of the informants are explained in more detail in Chapter Four.

[46] Except for the third group discussion which was conducted with the students in the marriage course I attended.
[47] That is, they all came from the 'twice born' *varna,* Brahman, Kshatriya, or Vaishya. In Chapter Five I discuss the caste groups in more detail. I also refer the reader to Dumont (1980) for more information on caste.

| Name | Sex | Age | Econ Class* | Religion / Caste^ | Alcohol / Smoke | Living Arrangement | Father/ Mother profession | Own profession | Rlp Status | Visit UK before |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nilesh | M | 25-30 | M | Vaishya (Patel) | NO | With in-laws | Business person / HM | Family business | LM (1 yr) | No |
| Jambli | F | 20-24 | M | Brahman | NO | With in-laws | Accountant/ HM | Web design | LM (1 yr) | No |
| Aditya | M | 25-30 | M | Gujarati Jain | Yes/No | Joint | Business person/ HM | Family business | AM (3 yrs) | No |
| Geet | F | 25-30 | M | Kutchi Jain | Yes/No | Joint | Business person/ HM | Housewife | AM (3 yrs) | No |
| Hiren | M | 25-30 | UM | Vaishya (Khadayata) | NO | With in-laws | Business person / HM | Family business | AM (2 yrs) | No |
| Swati | F | 25-30 | UM | Vaishya (Patel) | NO | With in-laws | Business person / Fashion designer | Travel Agency | AM (2 yrs) | Yes |
| Lena | F | 25-30 | M | Brahman | NO | Nuclear | University Prof / Teacher – HM | Dance Teacher | LM (5 yrs) | No |
| Priya | F | 20-24 | M | Vaishya (Patel) | NO | Nuclear | Shopkeeper / Teacher | Student | AM (6 mths) | No |
| Tarun | M | 25-30 | M | Vaishya (Patel) | NO | Nuclear | Teacher / HM | Pharmacist | AM (3 mths) | No |
| Krishna | M | 20-24 | LMi | Sindi | NO | Nuclear (Father) | Purchase Officer / HM | Student | S | No |
| Durish | M | 20-24 | M | Kshatriya (Lohana) | Yes/No | Joint family | Business person / HM | Student | R (4 mths) | Yes |
| Toni | M | 25-30 | UM | Vaishya (Leva Patil) | YES | Nuclear Family | Business person / HM | Family business | S | No |
| Rahul | M | 20-24 | UM | Jain | Yes/No | Nuclear Family | Business person / HM | Family business | S | No |
| Nirali | F | 20-24 | M | Vaishya (Leva Patil) | NO | Joint Family | Civil Servant / Clerk | Student nurse | S | No |
| Muktha | F | 20-24 | M | Tailor | NO | Hostel | Tailor / Tailor - HM | Student | S | No |
| Kareena | F | 25-30 | UM | Jain | NO | Flat | Doctor / Doctor | Bank | S | Yes, 5 years |
| Rekha | F | 20-24 | LMi | Muslim Ismaili | NO | Nuclear Family | Teacher / HM | Student | S | No |
| Seeta | F | 20-24 | LMi | Vaishya (Leva Patil) | NO | PGH/Flat | Blue collar worker / HM | Unemployed /Student | R (1 yr) | Yes, 1 year |

*Econ Class based on my own judgement, includes type of house (bungalow, flat, area), cars/motorbike, & travel abroad) M = middle UM = Upper middle LMi = Lower middle ^As defined by informants
AM = Arranged marriage, LM = love marriage S = Single, R = In relationship (as reported by informants) HM = Homemaker

**Table 3.1 Informants in Baroda, India**

Nine informants were married; I interviewed both members of three couples, and one member of another three couples. Two marriages were self-chosen, and the rest were arranged by family. The length of marriage varied from three months to five years. Only one couple, Aditya and Geet, had a child. Two informants were in a relationship. I didn't include the partners of these informants as 'main informants' as both partners were not Gujarati (Seeta was going out with a man from another state and Durish was going out with a foreigner). But I met and had discussions with both of them about their 'getting together story' and relationships

### 3.2.3 Recruitment in the UK

Before I began any data collection in India, I began the recruitment process in London. I hoped to recruit some Gujaratis here who could introduce me to their cousins in India. I used a wide variety of recruitment methods, including key informants, Internet sites, and community groups. However the eligible people I met were reluctant to give me the contact details of their 'cousins' in India.[48] What led to this? They had all been initially recruited in part because they had a cousin of similar age living in Gujarat. From later interviews and conversations with UK-based Indians, I suspect that these initially recruited people felt that the topic of love and intimacy was too sensitive or taboo for India-based Indians. The general impression was that Indians in India would not speak to anyone about relationships, let alone sex.[49] Conversely in India, all of my informants gave me the contact details of their friends or relatives in the UK. When I returned to the UK I sent emails and/or letters with the information sheet about the study to all the 'cousins' recommended by the informants in India. Out of the eight contacted, three took part; one couple, Lona and Sohan, and one single girl, Padma.[50]

The majority of informants in the UK were recruited through social networking websites such as Gumtree, 'Asian' student societies, word of mouth, and snowballing. In general I found recruitment more difficult in the UK. Young people in Baroda were keen and enthusiastic to take part in the study, but in the UK informants came across as more suspicious and reluctant. The recruitment procedures (such as using the Internet) may have impacted on the recruitment since I was often using an intermediary or having to explain the study over email. Alternatively, it may have been that my status as a non-Gujarati actually had the reverse effect in the UK than it did in India – i.e. Gujaratis in the UK felt *less* comfortable speaking with a non-Gujarati than they would have with a Gujarati or British Indian person. Some people I approached for recruitment or met at 'Asian events' seemed to be wary about my intentions for the study and my motivations for

[48] Only one (Renu) ultimately gave me the contact details of a cousin in India (Kareena).
[49] In fact I found little reluctance amongst Indians in India in talking about relationships and sexuality. Quite the opposite; some were even keen to show their willingness to talk about sex, notably Durish who told me more than once 'I'm totally cool talking about this', and indeed was quite candid in his interviews.
[50] In the end though, I felt that Padma at 16 years of age was too young relative to the other informants so she only completed one interview.

studying Gujaratis in the UK. I noted too that UK informants were more concerned about issues around anonymity and privacy than my informants in India. Perhaps this was because my future publications seemed closer to home than for those in India. Or perhaps they felt there was a possibility that we would know someone in common. It's difficult to assess. Previous research has reported similar difficulty in accessing second generation ethnic minorities for qualitative research (Twamley *et al.* 2009).

As explained above, I 'hung out' with few of these 'main informants', mostly because I seemed unable to explain participant observation to them; their 'culture' was too similar to my own – having me hang out with them seemed defunct when I was as likely to attend the same kinds of bars that they did. When I was invited to 'hang out', it tended to be to Gujarati and religious 'events' such as Navratri or Diwali celebrations.

### 3.2.4 Final sample of main informants in the UK

My sample of main informants in the UK consisted of six men and six women (see Table 3.2). This was smaller than the sample in India due in part to the difficulties I experienced in recruiting. As in India, all informants were aged between 20 and 30 years of age. Half had parents who had lived in East Africa before moving to the UK. Informants grew up in diverse areas; around a third grew up in a 'white' area, a third in a 'mixed ethnic' area and a third in a Gujarati' or 'Indian' area (as defined by the informants). All informants were Hindu or Jain, except for one Muslim, Ameera. They also were primarily of medium to high caste background, although two came from the lower Sudra caste (Naveen and Pretak).

| Name | Age | Sex | East African Roots | Econ Class* | Religion / Caste^ | Ethnic area | Living Arrangement | Father/ Mother profession | Own profession | Relationship Status | Visited India before |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lona | 25-30 | F | NO | M | Vaishya (Patel) | White | With spouse | Grcoery Shop Owners | Finance | LM (1 year) | YES |
| Sohan | 25-30 | M | NO | M | Vaishya (Patel) | White | With spouse | Business Person / Administrative Assistant | Finance | LM (1 year) | YES |
| Ameera | 25-30 | F | YES | UM | Muslim | Asian/ Gujarati | With spouse | Entrepreneurs | Medical Doctor | LM (1 year) | NO |
| Mahendra | 25-30 | M | YES | UM | Vaishya | White | With spouse | Finance / Homemaker | Business | LM (1 year) | YES |
| Darsha | 25-30 | F | NO | M | Vaishya (Potter) | Asian/ Gujarati | With fiancé | Factory owner / Homemaker | Solicitor | Engaged | YES |
| Pretak | 25-30 | M | NO | M | Sudra (Mochi) | Asian/ Gujarati | With fiancée | Unknown | IT | Engaged | NO |
| Prity | 20-24 | F | YES | M | Kshatriya (Lohana) | Asian/ Gujarati | With parents (nuclear) | Engineer / Homemaker | Journalist | Relationship (5 years) | YES |
| Renu | 20-24 | F | NO | M | Jain | Asian/ Gujarati | With partner | Journalist / Teacher | PR | Co-habiting (3 years) | YES |
| Rama | 20-24 | F | YES | M | Brahman | White | With parents (nuclear) | Bank Manager / Homemaker | Administrative assistant | Single | YES |
| Naveen | 25-30 | M | YES | LMi | Sudra (Mochi) | Mixed Ethnic area | With parents (nuclear) | Teacher / Homemaker | Student | Single | NO |
| Nihal | 20-24 | M | NO | LMi | Vaishya (Leuva Patel ) | Mixed Ethnic area | With friends | IT / Homemaker | Lawyer | Relationship (1 year) | YES |
| Yogesh | 20-24 | M | YES | M | Kshatriya (Lohana) | Asian/ Gujarati | Alone | Dentist / Homemaker | IT | Single | YES |

*Economic Class based on my own judgement, includes house and area grew up in (e.g. wealthy area, or council estate), and parents occupation. UM = Upper middle, M = middle, LMi = Lower middle
AM = Arranged marriage, LM = love marriage, R = In relationship, S = Single (as reported by informants) HM = Homemaker
^As defined by informants

**Table 3.2 Informants in London, UK**

Four informants were married, and two were engaged. I interviewed both members of these couples. Three other informants were in long-term relationships, one of which was co-habiting. All of these couples met without any facilitation from family. I was unable to find an 'arranged marriage' couple willing to participate in the study, despite extensive efforts. This is a limitation of the study, although several other informants had been through marital arrangement processes or were going through them at the time of the study. When I asked my informants why they thought these couples might be reluctant to take part in my study, they suggested they may be worried about how I would portray arranged marriage, which was perceived to be frequently mistaken for 'forced marriage' in the media. I also found that some Indians viewed an introduced marriage as a 'last resort', when other methods of courtship had failed, which may also have created some reluctance to take part.

## *3.3 Data Collection*

In the following section I discuss the three primary methods of data collection used; repeat in-depth interviews, group discussions, and non/participant observation. The use of multiple methods, or triangulation, reflects an attempt to secure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question (Denzin and Lincoln 2005), obtaining a rich set of data from which a 'thick description' can be constructed (Geertz 1973). It has been argued that triangulation suggests an attachment to positivist ideals of 'truth' seeking, using different methods to 'adjudicate between accounts' (Silverman 2001: 235). In contrast, I employed these various methods to examine how action and narration change depending on the setting, without privileging one 'tale' from another. In this way I could explore how meanings were constructed in different contexts and interactions. This was particularly useful in understanding relationships between men and women and perceived 'respectable' gender roles. Below I explain in more detail each data collection method and how they relate to the study objectives.

### 3.3.1 Interviews

I conducted three interviews with each main informant. The interviews focused on eliciting stories primarily about relations with members of the opposite sex from childhood through to now. The first two interviews then covered family background, parents' marriage, friendships, and relationship experiences. The third interview addressed issues around sexuality and physical intimacy (see Appendix A). Interviews took place in a variety of locations, depending on the preference of the informant. Most informants in India preferred not to be interviewed at home since many were living with family and privacy was difficult to obtain. I conducted most of the interviews in a private room of a local café. In the UK, I held interviews mostly in informants' own homes (many lived apart from parents), in their workplace, a room in my college and once in a

café. The interviews were recorded using a small digital recorder. Where permission was not given to record, I took detailed notes.[51] After the interviews were over, I made more notes on my reflections of the interview, the informant's body language and clothes and the general context surrounding the interview. The recorded interviews were then transcribed in full either by me or a professional transcriber.

I used repeat in-depth interviews for two reasons: First of all, they have been shown to promote trust and communication between researcher and interviewee through repeated and prolonged interactions and thus are thought to be particularly appropriate for sensitive topics (Joshi et al. 2001; Elam and Fenton 2003). I hoped then that the repeated meetings with me would help interviewees feel more comfortable in talking about the potentially sensitive topic of sexuality in the third interview. While any topic can be seen as sensitive for an interviewee, those topics which are normally taboo or generally only discussed with intimate friends and family, can be especially difficult to approach (Lee 1999).

Second, repeat interviews should result in a fuller, deeper and a more complete account (Laslett and Rapoport 1975 in Lee 1999). Issues that come up in one interview can be revisited in subsequent interviews. This is particularly important in early interviews when the schedules are developing (along with the skills of the interviewer). The repeat interviews also gave the informants time to reflect on questions posed during interviews and to later bring in topics they felt were relevant. For example, at the end of the third interview with Krishna, a single male student from Baroda, I asked him if there was anything more he wanted to add:

> *Yeah maybe, last time you asked one question, 'if you have male friend and female friend [is there a difference?]' and I said '1% of this thing [sexual attraction],' and sometimes, I didn't say that last time, but people sometimes try to find a mother or a sister or a friend, elderly people try to see a daughter, so… that 1% [of sexual attraction] might not be there. And one other thing that is important is that men hate men, women hate women.*

From there began a conversation about the pressures he felt from his male friends to 'act like a man'. This conversation was facilitated by the time lag between the first and second interview which gave Krishna an opportunity to reflect over my questions and his answers.

Repeat interviews then allow for a tunnelling approach to data collection, delving further into the topic of relationships and intimacy over the course of three meetings. But they can also bring about different and sometimes conflicting accounts. As Jocelyn Cornwell observes "what people say and how they say it, varies according to who they are talking to and the circumstances in which they find themselves in" (Cornwell 1984:12). Influenced by Goffman, Cornwell argues that

[51] Only Krishna in India refused recording for the first two interviews.

'public accounts' are more likely to be recounted in early encounters with informants. While Goffman maintains that managing appearances is a part of all social interaction (1959: 241), Cornwell argues that in novel and potentially unequal power relations the phenomenon is intensified (Cornwell 1984). Conducting repeated interviews, she argues, allows 'private accounts' to emerge. She defines these two accounts thus:

> "Public accounts are sets of meanings in common social currency that reproduce and legitimate the assumptions people take for granted about the nature of social reality." (Cornwell 1984:15)
>
> "Private accounts spring directly from personal experience and from the thoughts and feelings accompanying it." (Cornwell 1984:16)

The idea is not that the 'private account' is necessarily more truthful, but that different circumstances can provoke different accounts and explanations of behaviour. The initial contact might provoke more conventional or expected responses, while later interviews will reveal greater depth and thought. For example, in interviews with Renu, a female informant in the UK, she told me about how happy and in love she was with her boyfriend James. She demonstrated the quality of their relationship through telling stories about how they had fun together and still went on dates together, despite co-habiting for over a year. After the last interview, however, Renu broke up with James. She told me that over the course of the interviews with me, she realised that she was no longer in love with James and resolved to break up with him. Renu was invested in her own 'public' story; it was difficult for her to believe that she was no longer in love with the man she lived with and had been planning to marry. Through repeated interviews she spent more time delving into her own private story. Renu was telling the 'truth' both before and after her break up, both public and private understandings of her relationship. While this example is an extreme one, it demonstrates my understanding of Cornwell's 'public' and 'private' accounts.

*Topic Guide*

The interview topic guides were informed by the literature review and guided by my research questions and initial pilot research. While Glaser has stressed the need to begin data collection without preconceived ideas about the data, including avoiding interview guides, which he suggests is tantamount to 'forcing' data into your codes or preconceived theories (Glaser 1998), other grounded theorists have recognised the need and indeed inevitability of some previous knowledge of the topic and research design/planning (Charmaz 2006; Kelle 2005). Nonetheless, I used an open and iterative approach to the interviews, encouraging informants to lead the interviews as much as possible. Furthermore, in line with the grounded theory methodology, the interviews were modified as the analysis progressed (Charmaz 2006).

Initially the first interview contained a number of very broad questions, designed to allow the informant to create and form her/his own narrative; probing was used only as a means to search

for more depth or information. The broad questions centred on important life events and experiences with members of the opposite sex. The idea was to elicit stories from the informants which have not been pre-imposed by the researcher, allowing for the generation of new ideas and areas of exploration. The second and third interview were slightly more structured and centred on relationships before and after marriage, with the latter bringing in more sensitive topics about sexuality and reproductive health. I also included a 'ranking' exercise for informants to order a list of potential partner/spouse characteristics in order of importance. This was an illuminating exercise in drawing out the relative importance of, for example, virginity, and education.

After a few interviews in India (where I started my fieldwork), I realised that the largely unstructured approach of the first interview was not working and in fact may have been creating doubt among my informants in my ability to research. Informants appeared to be unsure what I wanted them to talk about and sceptical of whether I knew anything about research at all. Partly I felt this was due to an expectation of structured or survey type questions; often people asked me if it would be better to just email my 'questionnaire', or asked me for potential answers during an interview. I thus created more guidance in the first interview while still maintaining the iterative and narrative approach of the first draft.[52] The new questions focused more concretely on the informants' background and upbringing and the relationship 'story' of married couples (see Appendix A). The second and third interviews largely remained the same, though in line with the grounded theory methodology, I added and adjusted as new and interesting issues arose through a process of parallel data collection and analysis. I also introduced local events and news items which were pertinent to the interview topics. For example, while I was living in Baroda there was a controversy in the local university when someone recorded and publicised a video of couples kissing on campus. The story was written up in the *Times of India* local news section and was also on the local television news. I used this story to initiate conversations on public/private displays of affection. My experiences during observations also had a strong influence over the topic guides and questions addressed during interviews. Both fed in to one another.

*Couple Interviews*

I interviewed each couple together in the first interview and separately in subsequent interviews. The initial interview with both partners allowed me to see how the couple together constructed the story of their relationship, while later separate interviews gave them a chance to voice issues they may not have felt comfortable speaking about in front of one another. The data gathered in a joint interview are different to that collected during an individual interview in that the former represents a joint construction of events (Seymour *et al.* 1995). It has been suggested that consensual data (the 'public accounts') are more likely to emerge in these interviews (Morgan 1988). Nonetheless,

[52] Guidance did not include potential answers!

I was interested in using this interview to understand the couple's 'story' of the relationship and unpacking this further in the later two interviews. I also felt that the more sensitive material of the third interview would be better addressed in individual interviews. The interviews conducted together also gave a glimpse into how the couple act around one another, allowing an examination of both "narratives of practice and practices of narrative" (Einarsdottir and Heaphy 2010).[53] This was particularly interesting in considering gender roles in relationships. For example, the couple interviews gave me some insight into how stories were co-constructed and in particular who 'led' certain aspects or themes. It became apparent in this way that women were often more invested in the 'romantic' part of the relationship story.

*Differences between interviews in India and the UK*

There were a few differences between the interviews in the UK and the interviews in India. First, there appeared to be no obvious language barrier in the UK. This tended to result in slightly longer interviews in the UK. (Issues around language are discussed further below). Second, there appeared to be more introspection on the part of the UK informants. Many of them were keenly interested in my findings, and reflected long and hard about the 'meanings' of my questions. Perhaps as second generation Indians they were more invested in understanding their 'cultural roots'. They also seemed to be very interested in whether they were 'typical' of my informants and whether they were similar to Gujaratis from India. In India, I found my informants less interested in the outcomes of the study and more interested in my own opinions of Indians and India. They were also, as mentioned before, less suspicious of my motives for studying this topic and more trusting of the privacy and anonymity processes.

A third difference lay in the interview schedules. In particular I had to change my approach in talking about sexuality and virginity in the UK. Some questions I had used in India appeared naïve to my UK informants – such as questions about public displays of affection or sex before marriage. Broadly speaking, however, I addressed the same topics with informants in the two countries even if the 'approach' was slightly different.

*Periphery informants' interviews*

In addition to the interviews described above, I did one interview with two mothers of informants in India (Muktha and Priya's) and one with the father of Sohan from the UK. I introduced parent interviews rather late in my stay in Baroda. I then intended to do more in the UK, but found UK informants reluctant to have their parents included in the study. The interviews with the parents centred on their own experiences of courtship and marriage and their opinions on young people's

[53] Einarsdottir and Heaphy (2010) compared how couples behaved with one another during interviews, with their representation of their relationship. They found that the partner who was dominant in the interview, was often the partner who took a more dominant role in the relationship.

relationships and lives, specifically their son or daughter's spouse or future spouse. Other periphery informants included local university lecturers, matrimonial website staff, matchmakers, NGO workers, and university hostel wardens. All interviews were about their impressions of young people's relationships and marriage and some comparison with their own experiences. Most of these interviews were recorded but some were conducted 'off the cuff', in which case I took detailed notes after the interview, replicating as much as possible the language used by the informant. A typical topic schedule for older periphery informants is in Appendix A.

During participant and non-participant observation I also conducted many 'off the cuff', informal interviews. For example, at matchmaking events I asked informants their views on the event, their reasons for being there, their expectations of meeting a future partner and so on. These conversations were rarely recorded and were less structured than the interviews described above.

### 3.3.2 Group Discussions

Focus group discussions are particularly good for eliciting socially approved behaviour and rhetoric, i.e. the wider 'cultural' stories (Richardson 1990) or 'public accounts' referred to above by Cornwell (1984). They also provide 'snapshots of social interaction' (Kitzinger and Barbour 1999) giving a glimpse into how stories and discourses are generated and explained in group situations. For these reasons I was keen to have group discussions, which I conducted later in the fieldwork as ideas and questions of 'appropriate' behaviour emerged.

*Group discussions in India*

In India I held three focus group discussions, facilitated by me and assisted by a local sociology student who took notes. All the group discussions were in English and were recorded on a digital recorder. Two were held in a local café, one with men one with women, and a third was held with the class of a marriage course I attended in a local college. The latter was with all women too, since no men were currently enrolled in the course.[54] In order to promote discussion on normative views and expectations I included a vignette about a young couple, Vikram and Shilpa (see Appendix A). In the vignette, Vikram tells Shilpa that he has fallen in love with her and proposes marriage. She accepts his proposal and they become a couple. At this time they have sex and Shilpa becomes pregnant, though she ultimately loses the baby through a miscarriage. Since Vikram and Shilpa are from different castes, their parents refuse to allow them to marry one another and they elope. I divided the story into sections and after each section asked the group 'what do you think happens next?' Or 'what should they do now?' Participants drew on the social and educational background of Vikram and Shilpa when constructing their answers. For example,

[54] The marriage course is described in more detail below.

many participants suggested that Shilpa should not go out with Vikram since he did not have a very prestigious educational background. Gender norms were also addressed by reversing roles in the story; so I asked the participants how likely it would be that Shilpa would ask Vikram out rather than the other way round. After the story I also asked some more questions which elicited some general comments on the benefits of 'arranged marriage' and 'love marriage' and the respondents' expectations of relationships and marriage.

*Group discussions in the UK*

I did not hold any focus group discussions in the UK, primarily because I was running out of time. I did have informal chats amongst groups, what Goicolea (2001) has referred to as 'informal group discussions' (IGG). IGGs are similar in format to focus group discussions except that the participants know one another and the meetings can arise on a more 'off the cuff' basis. An IGG is somewhere between a 'naturally' occurring group discussion and a discussion provoked and led by the researcher. I did not use the vignette in these discussions, but I did initiate similar topics of conversation. These discussions were not recorded but detailed notes were written afterwards. One was held with a Brahman youth group and one was held with a main informant and her friends and brother. Both were mixed with men and women present.

### 3.3.3 Non/Participant Observation

In ethnography, an understanding of the context traditionally comes from participant observation. This method is most often associated with anthropology, where researchers live within a community they are unfamiliar. In participant observation the researcher takes part in the daily life of the informants, and at the same time observes the 'rules' of social and cultural behaviour. In this way the ethnographer learns the explicit and tacit aspects of the culture and surroundings (Dewalt *et al.* 1998:260). I used participant observation and non-participant observation[55] in part to understand the 'rules' which governed my informants' lives, but also to have informal conversations and to understand particular social situations (such as matchmaking events). This informal networking with my informants and their friends also helped in building confidence and trust, which I hoped would allow more 'private accounts' to emerge in interviews and during informal conversations.

Data gathered through observations facilitate the analysis of interview data by contextualising the stories which informants tell, but social interactions can also be seen as evidence in their own right. Thus, fieldwork notes from observations were also analysed to understand how they compare to the stories and selves portrayed in interviews. Formal research interviews and everyday interactions might elicit from the same informant different kinds of discourses and

[55] Participant observation is more experiential and interactive, while non-participant observation, at least in this thesis, involved no interaction with the observed and used more structured methods of note-taking.

different forms of impression management. The object was not to establish 'lies' but to understand the different contexts under which young people can act in different ways and how my presence and questions in an interview scenario lead them to present themselves in particular ways. This too can be seen as a form of 'triangulation', which contributes to the overall 'thick' ethnographic description which I was attempting to create.

As elaborated on in the introduction to this chapter, observations in Baroda and London differed, with the latter containing more non-participant observation than the former. Below I discuss what participant and non-participant observation means in this study and how it differed between the two field sites.

*Observations in India*

In 2005-6 I spent eight months in Baroda, Gujarat. The whole time I was there I was, in a sense, 'participating' and observing. I found a place to live – at first a long-term paying guest house and later a shared apartment – I made friends, I took up dance classes and generally got to know Baroda as my new home. I was particularly interested in youth culture, so I attended a lot of parties and hung out in cafes, malls, college campuses, and parks. Participating in this way allowed me to learn first hand about 'youth life'; where and when people can socialise and the different 'rules' of social engagement of the different settings. During parties, for example, I observed how women 'act' towards men and vice versa – how gender is presented to the opposite sex. By snatched conversations and men's reactions to *my* behaviour, I also learnt how I as a woman was 'supposed' to behave. For example, though I was very careful in my manner of dress, (some of my female friends felt I was 'too conservative' – always covering my shoulders for example), and was very clear with men on my relationship status as an engaged woman, I received overtly flirtatious and sometimes abusive behaviour at parties. This provoked conversations on the Indian image of 'western marriage' (not worth much) and 'western' women (promiscuous). But I also learnt that men's reactions were partly related to my drinking of alcohol and dancing with men I didn't know well.

'Hanging out' with people, also gave me an opportunity to get to know my informants better and allowed new topics to arise which would not have occurred to me in the interviews. This was best seen with Priya and Seeta, the two Baroda informants with whom I had the most contact. Conversations with them frequently helped inform my interview schedules and created new lines of inquiry. For example, I was with Seeta when I started getting text messages from a man I had met at a party. This provoked a long conversation about the etiquette of text messaging with men and how women 'fear' the attention of single men who can easily misinterpret 'friendly' behaviour. This became a strong theme with single women in my study. Seeta and other informants

described to me the many ways in which they 'managed' friendships with their male friends to avoid the misconstruing of a 'friendship' with a 'relationship'. On the other hand Priya, a newly married woman, gave me many details on the life of a newly wed, which were then followed up with other informants.

As part of my observations I also attended a 'marriage course' in a local college. The course aimed to offer students "an insight into the concepts and changing ideologies pertaining to marriage and family life."[56] Teachers and organisers of the course described it as a means to help young people in their future family and marital decisions (none of the students were married) and to help them help others in the same way through public service work. Topics covered included: 'Selection of a marriage partner,' 'Preparation and prelude to marriage' and 'Adjustment to marriage.' Love and gender roles were also frequent topics of conversation. The teacher used academic texts and her own common sense approach. There were around 40 young women aged between 19 and 20 enrolled in the course. I had been given permission to 'audit' the course, but I made it clear that I would also be observing the class as part of my fieldwork. I sat at the back of the classroom but I rarely contributed, as I was more interested in taking notes about what others were saying. I also came to know the students through mingling with them before and after class. The course was conducted in English and usually started with a brief lecture by the teacher before group discussions and student presentations. Although it was an examined course, the atmosphere of the class was relatively informal and there were frequently lively debates amongst the students. The course was extremely useful in understanding young people's views on 'appropriate' behaviour and the limits of discourses around relationships. For example, the fact that the course was called the 'marriage course' alone suggested that relationships are normatively understood within that framework.

Non-participant observation was more structured. I took mini-surveys in parks, college campuses, malls and different street areas at different days and times. In these surveys I took note of how many women and men were present, their approximate ages, whether they were in mixed groups, the clothes they were wearing and whether there were any public displays of affection (a hot topic in Baroda while I was there!). In cafes I observed couples and their interactions with one another. This helped build up a map of where is considered appropriate to court and for whom (which age, which class). These sites of observation were often suggested to me by my informants and friends. I was driven to out of the way parks and the infamous 'bridge' young couples frequently escape to for some privacy. I was also brought to specific 'kissing areas' on college campuses.

[56] Taken from the course description. The location of the course is not mentioned to protect the identity of the participants.

I would say there was a spectrum of participation in my observations then; from more active participation in parties and my dance class, to full observation in parks and 'kissing areas'. In this way I built up an understanding of the norms of behaviour, the context and the cultural rules for young middle class men and women in Baroda.

*Observations in the UK*

The kind of participant observation I was able to do in India was less possible in the UK. In India I simply made friends as a newcomer to Baroda and explained to people that I kept a diary of all my interactions and activities during the day which would help me understand Gujarati culture for my thesis. The difficulties around courtship and the recent emergence of 'youth spaces' meant that my informants were enthusiastic to show me around Baroda. I was also a novelty in India, and for some a status symbol. The large, fragmented and multicultural nature of London and the fact that after living here for four years, I am myself a bit of a Londoner anyway (and despite being Irish am often taken for an English or British person) meant that informants had little reason to 'show me' London. So while I did 'hang out' a few times with my informants, generally I stuck with more structured forms of event-centred observation in the UK, as explained above. In particular I attended Asian speed dating nights, matchmaking events, student or nightclub 'Asian nights' and religious celebrations. Since I was usually the only non-Asian attendee at these events, I was conspicuous and conversations were often initiated by attendees curious about my presence.

As part of my observations I attended five Asian speed dating events in London. The format is as follows: Men and women sit at individual tables. Every three minutes a bell signals for the man to change table ensuring that every man got to speak to every woman and vice versa. The format is based on the premise that people make their mind up about another person within three minutes of meeting them. Most events had a mingling period before or after the speed dating rounds. During these mingling periods I mixed with attendees and asked them about their experiences. Some attendees asked me about my opinions of other attendees or if I had information about other attendees they fancied – such as what 'community' they come from i.e. Gujarati/Punjabi etc.

On top of this I attended two 'matchmaking' events organised by an older first generation Gujarati matchmaker based in London. These events were more family oriented affairs. While they often had speed dating as a component, other family members were also present and they included a presentation from local important Indian business people and children performing Indian traditional or Bollywood style dances for entertainment. There was also no alcohol at the matchmaking events I attended. At these events I spoke with participants about why they were there, what their expectations were in terms of relationships, what their family's expectations were

and any other matters which arose. I also conducted more formal structured observations at some of these events and in Ealing (a predominantly Gujarati area in North London) – such as counting numbers of men and women, noting clothes and public displays of affection and so on. This mirrored the kinds of structured non-participant observation which I conducted in Baroda. At other times, informants invited me to their houses, to parties or to meet friends who I might be interested in talking to. Nonetheless, I was primarily invited as a 'researcher' to attend or observe British Asian events. On the whole then my UK observations fell more on the non-participant end of the observation spectrum.

### 3.3.4 Language

In the UK since my informants were second generation, they all spoke fluent English. Many in fact could not speak Gujarati or Hindi. In India, due to the class and education background of my informants, the level of English was quite high. (Ability and frequency of speaking English is seen as a symbol of class.) I had learnt basic Gujarati before starting my fieldwork and continued to do so while there, but overall I found informants preferred to speak to me in English. For some this was an opportunity to practice their English with a native English speaker while for others, such as Toni, a young man who had attended an English language boarding school, it was easier to speak in English. Nonetheless, learning Gujarati was an advantage to follow the flow of interviews in which there was an interpreter present (with three informants) and was appreciated by informants. At any rate, even when people speak Gujarati they throw in English words frequently. Many words around relationships and marriage are spoken in English, such as 'love', 'love marriage' and 'propose'.

On the other hand, often in group situations in Baroda (much to my disappointment) informants spoke in Hindi. Since all of my informants in India were bilingual in Hindi and Gujarati, if there was anyone who was not Gujarati present, they immediately switched to Hindi. There often were non-Gujaratis present, for even those who had been in Gujarat all their lives were unlikely to speak Gujarati if their family didn't, or if they went to an English speaking school. There were also many students from other parts of India studying in the University of Baroda. This highlighted for me the multicultural nature of even a relatively small city like Baroda and brought into question cultural boundaries such as 'Gujarati', even when living in Gujarat. Being surrounded by middle class Indians from other parts of India also confirmed for me that my findings were not only applicable to middle class Gujaratis. I hope that the in-depth descriptions of my informants will enable other researchers to decide how relevant my findings are for them.

With three informants I had an interpreter present during the recorded interviews; with Nilesh I worked with a male interpreter and with Jambli and Priya[57] I worked with a female interpreter. Both interpreters were in their twenties with some experience in research, one a PhD student and the other, an NGO worker. Before any translating, I gave them detailed guidance on conducting the interviews; I asked them to translate where possible word for word, to avoid embellishing in any way and to speak in the first person when giving me the translation. I also asked them to sign a contract of confidentiality and discussed with them in detail about the ethics of the study, including the informed consent process. Guidance was particularly important for the third interview which delved into issues around sexuality and sexual behaviour. As recommended by Temple and Edwards, I first interviewed the interpreters to understand their perspectives on the issues which were to arise during the interviews with informants. This was to understand if they had any strong feelings on the issues and to understand their own 'position' as fellow creators of data (Temple and Edwards 2002). After these interviews (in which it emerged that both were in a love relationship) I practiced interviews with the translators to get them used to talking about the topics. I felt that they understood well the goals of the research and kept a neutral approach during the interviews.

After the interview was over, another translator back-checked the recorded interviews; she listened to the interview recording and made her suggestions in Microsoft Word 'tracked changes' on the transcript. These were then discussed with the original interpreter. I did not do this to find 'one correct' translation (cf. Bassnet 1994) but to facilitate a discussion with the interpreters on why they chose the words they did and anything omitted. In this way, I led the interpreter through a process of reflexivity on their translation which became an extra layer of data in interpreting and understanding the translated interviews. In the findings that follow, I note where an interpreter was present and print the interpretation I was given by them during the interview. In some cases the interpreter entered into the conversation, and this is recorded to.

Despite the sensitivity of the topic, I felt that my informants were quite at ease with the interpreters. On all occasions, the interpreters seemed to get on well with the interviewees and both before and after the 'formal questions' we frequently stayed on chatting amongst the three of us. As with other interviews, I took extensive notes after the interview. I also transcribed the English parts of these interviews myself.

On the other hand, some informants, such as Muktha and Tarun, had poor English skills but chose to have no interpreter present, perhaps because they wanted to practise English or maybe

[57] Priya was also a good friend with whom I regularly met and conversed outside of the recorded interviews. Although we communicated well in those conversations (in half Gujarati, half English) she felt more comfortable in the recorded interviews with an interpreter.

because they were embarrassed about having a third person present. These interviews in some respects are more difficult to interpret from the transcript alone, since tone of voice and gestures played a greater role in communication. They are also more limited in that conjectures about language use were minimal – in interpreting these interviews I concentrated more on substance and story.

### 3.3.5 Addressing sensitivity

How my informants behave in their privates lives and how they express intimacy to one another when no one else is around can only potentially be gathered through interview material. This is both personal and potentially sensitive information. There are two main approaches to studying sensitive topics, such as sexuality, which can be broadly segregated into methods that maintain distance and anonymity between the researcher and researched, and methods that promote trust through building rapport. In recent years the latter approach has gained more popularity, even for survey studies,[58] since there is conflicting evidence that anonymity through, for example, computer assisted surveys, helps maintain validity (di Mauro et al. 2003; Tourangeau and Smith 1996).[59] I intended to build trust with my informants through repeated interactions – three in-depth interviews and informal 'hanging out' – hoping that this would facilitate the sharing of personal information. I feel this method had some success; some informants gave me 'feedback' in the last interview on how they felt about participating in the study, a few told me that they felt more comfortable sharing personal information with me by the third interview. There were also some notable differences between information shared in the first interview and that of the last interview. For example, Durish, one of my Baroda informants, never mentioned his girlfriend in the first interview, ambiguously telling me he was not looking for a girlfriend at present. But in the fourth[60] interview he asked me what he should buy for his foreign girlfriend on Valentine's Day. The intimacy and trust built up over several interactions was important in facilitating this revelation. This is an example of the 'private account' emerging.

On the other hand, in some interviews there was little intimacy created. One informant in London, Yogesh, chose to have all our interviews in a meeting room in his office. There was little time for 'chit chat' in those formal surroundings. Yet, I felt he was very candid in his replies and he confessed he had rarely spoken so much to anyone about 'these topics'. In this situation I felt the most important factors were a non-judgemental attitude, and the privacy of the encounter. This was further evidenced by interviews in which privacy was lacking. For example, in my last interview with Sohan, a married informant in London, his wife kept 'popping in' to get something

[58] For example, the most recent NATSAL British sex survey drew "upon the strengths of qualitative methodology" in designing the survey study (Mitchell et al. 2007:519).
[59] At any rate the kind of qualitative data I was after was better served by in-depth interviews than surveys.
[60] I interviewed some informants more than three times. I had also met Durish several times at parties and in coffee shops.

from the kitchen. This inhibited some disclosure in the third interview as he whispered and cut himself off at several points.

Other researchers have suggested that an interviewer similar to the interviewee in terms of age, sex or ethnicity will help in addressing sensitive topics (Elam and Fenton 2003). I was a similar age to my informants and the same sex as half of them. I did not see any systematic differences between interviews between men and women; some interviews with women were uncomfortable and stilted and some interviews with men flowed easily, and vice versa. To some extent this depended on the interviewee's attitude to sex, experience of relationships, or the conditions of the interview – as described above. In terms of ethnicity, I am aware that some researchers recommend 'matching' ethnicity between interviewers and interviewees (e.g. Papadopoulos and Lees 2002; Rhodes 1994).[61] But matching for one social identity can essentialise the ethnicity of a person and fails to take account of the dynamic interplay of social differences and identifications (Song and Parker 1995). Song and Parker discuss how despite sharing an ethnic background with their interviewees, the respondents made claims of both commonality and difference and withheld information in unpredictable ways based on assumptions about their social identifications (1995). I found this to be the case with my informants in both India and the UK. They aligned with me on some things (such as educational background) and distanced themselves from me in others (such as my relationship type). I integrated these observations into the analysis to understand what these instances of alignment and distancing suggested about their attitudes and beliefs.

### *3.4 Data Analysis*

The analysis broadly follows the methods as outlined by Kathy Charmaz. Charmaz advocates a constructivist approach to grounded theory. In a constructivist approach:

> "The goal is to show how interview responses [or data] are produced in the interaction between interviewer and respondent, without losing sight of the meanings produced or the circumstances that condition the meaning-making process. The analytic objective is not merely to describe the situated production of talk, but to show how what is being said relates to the experiences and lives being studied." (Holstein and Gubrium 1997: 127)

A constructivist approach to grounded theory then should lead us to "*how* and sometimes *why* participants construct meanings and actions in specific situations" (Charmaz 2006:130 italics in original). As such I explore the kinds of stories that people are invested in as they explain their behaviour and interpret their situations. In this study I am particularly interested in the relationship

[61] On the other hand within anthropology the ethnographer is traditionally expected to study a different cultural group from her own, since an 'insider' studying her/his own group might be less able to recognise or analyse 'norms' of behaviour (cf. Malinowski 1922:1-25).

aspirations people have; what makes a 'good' marriage or relationship and how this impacts on the way they live out their daily lives. In addition, I attempted to uncover how and why these stories are different for informants in the UK and India.

The analysis was conducted using the NVIVO computer program, version eight (QSR International 2008). The following section explains the data analysis procedures I went through. They are ordered sequentially into separate 'steps' of analysis but in fact the analysis went through a much more chaotic back and forth process.

Step One – Immersion in the data

After each interview, I listened through the recording at least once, sometimes making notes of follow-up questions for a later interview. Then I transcribed the interviews, or had a professional transcriber take a first attempt and then 'fix it' the way I wanted it, including non-verbal queues and the context of the interview from my fieldnotes. Conventions in transcription notation were taken from Silverman (2001) and from theatre play scripts. After the interviews were transcribed I then read through them again with the intention to become immersed in the data through reading and rereading (Silverman 2001; Barrett 1996). At this stage I also took notes on emerging themes or ideas sparked by the transcripts and field notes.

StepTwo – Coding

There were two main phases to coding; in the initial phase I coded each line in a sub-sample of interviews and field notes. The sub-sample included interviews of two male informants in India and two in the UK, and of two female informants in India and two in the UK (total eight informants), and field notes from the first month in each site. The codes emerged from the data itself, rather than from a previously devised frame of codes. Line by line coding is used to capture the "essence" of each statement; the code should capture the meaning or action in the line, it is the first step in interpretation (Charmaz 2006:45). In the second phase I brought together all the codes that had emerged during this initial stage and subsumed them under focused codes. Focused codes are "more directed, selective and conceptual" than the initial line by line codes (Charmaz 2006:57). While the line by line codes often focused on actions or intentions within a line, the focused code captured larger sections of data in a slightly more abstract way. Focused codes were discussed with my supervisors, using one interview as an example, to test that they fit and made sense for someone beyond myself. These focused codes were then used to code all the data – while still allowing new codes to emerge.

Step Three - Memo Writing, Categories, and Concepts

The coding is interspersed with memo writing – that is reflective writing on the emergence of important themes and codes. In memo writing "you stop and analyse your ideas about the codes in any – and every – way that occurs to you during the moment" (Charmaz 2006:73; see also Glaser 1998). These memos should help in the abstraction of codes and ideas about the data. They also help in identifying gaps in the data or analysis, or in pointing the way towards the most salient concepts which emerge from the data. Memos also facilitate the constant comparison for which grounded theory is so well known: Data from different individuals and in different contexts are compared and questions are asked of emerging theories or concepts, constantly refining and reworking the understanding of the data (Charmaz 2006). The data from India and the UK were analysed in one 'file' but following the grounded theory methodology, I constantly compared the data and concepts from the two contexts, trying to understand how Gujaratis in the UK were similar or different to those in India, and speculate about why this might be. I found this comparative element to the analysis helpful in crystallising the emerging concepts. To some degree it helped 'make strange' some views, especially those amongst the UK informants which I often found similar to my own. These comparisons were worked over within the memos that I wrote.

The memos then helped to elevate codes into categories. Categories should "explicate ideas, events, or processes in your data – and do so in telling words. A category may subsume common themes and patterns in several codes" (Charmaz 2006:91). Categories emerged from the focused codes which I felt best represented the data, or at least the story that was emerging for my thesis. These often emerged from memos which became the basis of findings chapters. For example, Chapter Eight is entitled 'Arranging Love'. This term emerged from my understandings of 'focused codes' around courtship in Baroda. It suggests both how informants in Baroda appear to manipulate their feelings for their partner, and the integration of love with arranged marriage.

Categories were then raised to concepts; in interpretive grounded theory, theoretical concepts enable an understanding of the relationships between the categories. A concept subsumes categories and has 'analytical weight', it should help you to understand the connections between the categories and bring the data together into a complete story (Charmaz 2006). The process is one of increasing abstraction, but grounded in the data collected. The concepts integrate the whole thesis; each findings chapter leads into one another. They are linked both thematically and theoretically.

## *3.5 Reflective notes on my role in data collection and analysis*

A constructivist approach to grounded theory means taking a reflexive stance on how the researcher affects the data, the analysis, and the interpretation. As such, a researcher should reflect on how her own values and background impact on the research (Charmaz 2006). Data is no longer viewed as 'out there' ready to be plucked and objectively analysed by the distanced researcher (Gibbons *et al.* 1994). Rather the researcher is seen as a 'traveller' who 'activates narrative production' (Holstein and Gubrium 1997). The data is co-constructed between researcher and researched and the "story" that emerges is (partially) a function of the research situation and who carries out the interview. Charmaz's approach to grounded theory recognises the previous experiences, background, and assumptions of the researcher, without suggesting that this be problematic, rather it is integral to her constructivist position which acknowledges the *creation* of the knowledge between the researcher and researched. Above I reflected on how my situation and personal preferences may have affected the selection of the sample. Here I discuss how my own 'self-presentation' and values impacted on my interactions and discussions with informants, so that the reader can judge more fully how I came to the conclusions I present in the chapters that follow. Such reflexivity is also integrated in the findings presented in later chapters.

### 3.5.1 India

In this section I reflect primarily on the implications of my 'foreigner' status and gender on the data I collected. As mentioned before, being a foreigner aided recruitment, both because I was 'novel' and because it suggested anonymity for my informants. It also provoked many conversations and comparisons on 'life in India' versus 'life in the West'. As such I received many personal questions from some informants, particularly those I was closest to. For example some asked me whether my marriage was an arranged marriage and another asked me if I had engaged in premarital sex. People often asked me about my family and parents too, about how they felt about my marriage and my studies in India. At first, I tried to withhold information about myself, feeling that too much disclosure on my part would influence what my informants would feel able to tell me. But later I realised that some disclosure on my side helped informants share personal stories with me (see Oakley 1981). Keeping information 'secret' anyway was difficult and tiresome, particularly with informants who I spent a lot of time with. Sometimes I 'disclosed' seemingly small and harmless pieces of information which received unanticipated reactions: Once I joked with Seeta (a guest house lodger and informant) about my ex-boyfriend in front of my fiancé Ricardo. Later on she asked me how he had felt about this and explained to me how shocked she felt that I had mentioned an ex-boyfriend in front of him. I explained to her that for me and Ricardo this was a harmless remark since many people in Ireland and the UK had multiple relationships before marriage. This conversation evolved into her own disclosure about

an ex-boyfriend she had previously never mentioned, including a discussion about how Ajay (her boyfriend) felt about it.

Being foreign I felt allowed informants to disclose behaviour which would be censured in Baroda, particularly around sexual behaviour. The assumption was that I was more sexually 'open' than Indian women, or at least that my stance was unclearer. As well as revealing their sexual experiences to me, some informants asked me advice on contraception, or whether I felt they should engage in premarital sex, or simply 'what sex is like'. In thinking about how my gender impacted on the data collection, Toni's interviews come to mind. Toni was a young single man in Baroda, going through marriage introductions at the time of our meeting. Throughout his interviews Toni vacillated between a more 'macho' representation of himself – such as insinuating that he had slept with many women – and a more 'sensitive' representation of himself – such as telling me how sex should remain 'special' and within marriage. In part it seemed that my neutral reactions to his stories left him at a loss. I doubt that an interview with an Indian woman would have been so unclear for him. My status as a foreign woman gave me an ambiguous position. To some extent 'western' women are perceived as neither woman nor man; normative rules of gendered behaviour were relaxed for me. This, I feel, facilitated discussions with men about sex, which I suspect may have been more inhibited with an Indian woman.

My foreigner status also allowed me to behave in ways which would have been problematic for a local woman. As noted by Donner, a female German anthropologist who has conducted research in Calcutta, India:

> "Female anthropologists, unlike their local sisters, may be free to move between houses and make contact with men and even explore some of the places into which women belonging to the community would never venture" (Donner 2008:14).

For example, in the all-female paying guest house I lived in, the owner locked the guest house entrance every night *from the outside.* Women who stay at paying guest houses are understood to be in the care of the owners and these are considered more 'respectable' places to stay than university hostels. Unlike all the other guests, however, I was allowed to have a key and come and go as I pleased. Such behaviour in my fellow lodgers might have resulted in a 'bad reputation' but it appeared to have little impact on their impression of me.

In addition my status as a woman travelling alone meant that I was perceived by some as a 'strong independent' and probably 'feminist' woman. This provoked some varying reactions. On the one hand, several men told me how they 'admired' my independence and strength to travel and go around Baroda alone. One male informant, for example, even told his girlfriend to be more like me and engaged with me at length about how he was encouraging her to have her own

career and identity so she could stand on her own two feet 'just like Katherine.' On the other hand, in interviews men told me they were wary of women's involvement in the workforce – worrying that this would lead to the dissolution of the 'family'. One man told me that he would never marry a foreign-born woman since she would expect too much freedom. Thus it seemed that at least this aspect of my gendered self did not completely inhibit men from conversations on gender.

At any rate, I tended to reinforce my similarity to my informants rather than any differences. One way I did this was by discussing my engagement and experiences of meeting and selecting a spouse. The engagement also helped to waylay unwelcome flirtations and provoked some interesting comments on the differences between 'western' and Indian marriage. Being engaged also helped dispel some of the 'sexual tension' that arose in interviews about sexuality. I feel that men were more comfortable talking to me about such topics since I was 'unavailable.'

My vegetarianism had a more mixed reaction. Perhaps rather predictably the vegetarians were happy with my choice of diet and seemed to feel it was a further reflection of my dedication to Gujarati life and culture – though I had been a vegetarian long before I went to India. On the other hand, the meat eaters had assumed that I was the same and conspiratorially told me about the few meat restaurants in town. One girl proudly told me about how she ate in McDonalds at least once a week and invited me to join her. We were both disappointed by that invitation.

### 3.5.2 UK

As I discussed before, the UK-based fieldwork was more event centred. This tended to mean that I saw my British informants at 'Asian' events, such as Asian speed dating nights and Asian student nights. This may have privileged a more 'Asian' experience and understanding of my informants' lives. Outside of these occasions the only access I had to their lives, other than during interviews, was through their 'Facebook' or 'MySpace' profiles. It was clear from these that my informants had a life beyond 'Asian' events; I saw the mix of friends they had (Indian and non-Indian), other social life activities they attended and holiday updates. It was through a 'status update'[62] on Facebook that I discovered Renu had broken up with her boyfriend (right after our third interview) and that another informant was running in the London marathon. But although I saw numerous photos of parties, marathons and holidays, I was not present at these events and so the experience and understanding of the social context of their lives is somewhat different.

As in India, my cultural difference to some extent helped to encourage informants to speak about mundane topics of which I was ignorant (or faux ignorant). For example, I asked Yogesh, a young

[62] Facebook is a social networking Internet site. Users regularly 'update their status' through short, normally one sentence summaries, such as 'working in the library'. This update is then publicised to all their friends when they log in.

single man in London, about changing names after marriage to which he gave me a long explanation of Indian beliefs around a woman joining the man's family, and stories about friends countering this tradition. I feel my 'outsider' status enabled stories such as these to emerge. I also 'used' my Irish identity to distance myself from English people. I hoped this would allow informants to speak about negative experiences with English people, perhaps racism, or their negative appraisals of English culture. To some extent this worked; a few informants told me that they felt the Irish were very similar to Indians, particularly in terms of family values, while critiquing 'English' culture. It was true too that I was aware of intergenerational differences amongst my informants that were similar to those of my Irish peers, and perhaps this helped some informants relate to me in interviews. On the other hand, few stories of racism emerged in the interviews. This was not anyway necessarily relevant, nor did I broach the topic, but perhaps it might have been a more prominent theme had I been Asian. I did hear a lot about Asian racism against Black and Muslim people though, which may not have emerged if I fell into those categories.

It is difficult to assess to what degree my gender impacted on data collection in the UK. As in India, there were some situations where I felt more vulnerable as a woman; some male interviewees invited me to their home to conduct the interviews, if they were single I chose to interview them at their workplace or in my college. This may have inhibited a more congenial atmosphere but I felt it was necessary. The one time I did go back to an informant's house (a male 'peripheral informant'), he turned out to be a 'pimp'. I was not in danger but nor was it a comfortable situation.

My gender also may have inhibited some men from taking part in the study, or from revealing particular issues to me in an interview. It is perhaps likely that men felt uncomfortable showing more 'macho' images of themselves to a female researcher. On the other hand, I found my male informants in the UK sometimes the most engaged in the research process. In thinking about this, I wondered if they didn't often get the opportunity to speak about their thoughts, feelings, and experiences around relationships, a topic stereotypically associated with women. Some seemed to be genuinely pleased that I had thought to include men at all in the study.

### *3.6 Reliability and Validity*

Questions of reliability centre on the replicability of the study, i.e. whether another researcher researching the same people would produce similar findings (LeCompte and Goetz 1982). I have tried to detail as much as possible the methods I have used, leaving an 'audit trail' (Schwandt and Halpern 1988) of the data collection and analysis. I have also discussed how I as a researcher

have potentially impacted on the research process through my own self-presentation and values (Miles and Huberman 1994). This should help others to understand how I came to the conclusions which follow. In addition, 'triangulation' – the use of several different methods to look at the same issue – has given me more confidence in my conclusions by creating a fuller and more rounded picture of the topic. The term triangulation has been criticised by some who feel that it suggests a measure of precision unachievable in qualitative research (Blaikie 1991). It's true that different methods of data collection may imply different findings, but the point is to achieve a holistic contextualised picture of the phenomenon, rather than achieving some measure of the 'truth'.

Addressing the validity of a study involves asking whether the conclusions reached for this group of people are equally valid for the larger group from which they are drawn, i.e. do the findings 'fit' (Miles and Huberman 1994:279)? I have described in-depth the sampling and recruiting procedure in order to present who I spoke with in this study. I have also described the context in detail (further descriptions to come in Chapters Four and Five). This enables other researchers to assess how applicable the findings are to other settings and similar groups of people. Another way of validating the findings is to check whether they fit with findings from other studies done with similar participants. In the chapters that follow, I outline where my work both coincides with and departs from the established literature in the field, and explain why and how I think this might be the case.

As suggested by Charmaz, I sought to check if my findings resonated with my study participants or people like them – does the study "make sense to them" (Charmaz 2006:183)? Towards the end of my stay in India I made a presentation to a group of young Gujarati women in the local university on my emerging findings, to see if they could relate to what I found with the sample described above. Rather gratifyingly, they could. But as Abrams noted "overt respondent validation is only possible if the results of the analysis are compatible with the self-image of the respondents" (Abrams 1984:8). Bloor therefore recommends that rather than considering member feedback as validation, it might be better to think of it as further data (Bloor 1983:172). Still, I feel that such feedback from other Gujaratis (not the actual informants) can aid the validation of the findings. First because this group are less likely to feel 'offended' by the data, since they may well rationalise that the findings make sense for 'other' Gujaratis and not for them. Second, we might surmise that the reactions to the findings, negative or otherwise, could make sense with and therefore validate the findings. That is, a negative reaction could validate findings when those findings suggest that Gujaratis want to hide the importance of (for example) status when choosing their partner. At any rate, given the complexity of this kind of validation, it should be treated with caution.

### *3.7 Ethical considerations and risk*

For every study it is important to take into account the ethical implications and potential risks for the study participants. In designing this research, I consulted ethical guidelines from the British Sociological Association and the American Anthropological Association and sought ethical approval from the City University ethics board.

A common issue in most social science research studies involves obtaining informed consent from the study participants. I have included in Appendix B the form I used to collect informed consent, which follows the conventional procedures of City University. I also produced a detailed information leaflet (Appendix B) which was used to recruit and explain the study to informants before obtaining consent.[63] The form and leaflet were only used with those informants who took part in a recorded 'formal' interview or discussion. Informed consent was sought verbally when conducting observations. I did this by constantly reminding those I came into contact with that I was conducting research on 'courtship and marriage' of young Gujaratis. In organised events I sought permission to attend by the organisers and they often informed the event participants that I was a researcher. But in public places, such as cafes and nightclubs, I felt it was unnecessary to advertise my researcher status.

Where recruitment was carried out in public, or through word of mouth, I omitted to mention the sensitive information which would be sought in the interviews. I felt, on balance, that if it were generally known that I was eliciting sensitive information around relationships and sexuality, my informants might be stigmatised for taking part. Thus only when I was alone with potential informants I discussed the exact topics covered in the interviews. Of course, this might have made it more difficult for participants to then refuse to take part in the study. But more sensitive information about sexuality was only elicited in the third interview, and I stressed to informants that they could withdraw from the study at any time, or refuse to answer any questions. Only one informant refused to answer a question – Hiren, who also refused to complete the third interview, along with his wife.[64]

Another important aspect of ethical research procedure is to ensure the confidentiality of informants. I have used pseudonyms for all the respondents and I have changed or made ambiguous some of their demographic and background details. But since some informants were 'matched' and some were recruited through 'snowballing', there was still a chance that individuals could be identified in the study. This was also obviously the case in group discussions. This was dealt with in two ways; first I did not elicit personal information in the group discussions and

[63] Information leaflets and consent forms were translated for informants with English as a second language.
[64] They told me that was because they didn't have any free time.

concentrated more on opinions, norms, and participants' views on the vignette. Second, for those taking part in interviews I explained the possibility of their cousin/friend or partner being able to decipher who they were in the study, despite my attempts to disguise details (for example, there is only one Muslim-Hindu couple in the study, so anyone who knew they were taking part in the study would know which couple they were). I agreed with my informants therefore to disassociate any 'sensitive material' from the pseudonym used in the thesis. I asked them to flag up anything they might consider 'sensitive', though this rarely happened. Most of my informants seemed to think that I was overly scrupulous in worrying about their anonymity, particularly in India.

Some ethical considerations cannot be prepared for, however. For example, one informant asked me if he and his wife could read the transcripts of their interviews. He told me that he had not mentioned it to his wife yet, but that he felt they would enjoy comparing their answers to the questions and reflecting on their understandings of their relationship. In the end I decided against giving them the transcripts. It was not clear to me that she wanted her husband to see the transcripts of her interviews and it might be difficult for her to justify saying no. From that point, it became my policy to withhold the transcripts from my informants in order to keep a consistent policy for everyone.

Another issue I found difficult was the disparity between the kinds of ideal relationships which informants described to me and my understanding of the reality of their relationships. This was particularly the case for women who sought an egalitarian relationship with their husband but, from my point of view, had subordinate positions to their husbands and partners. I am not the first to come across this problem, as Kelly *et al.* ask:

> "What do we do when our understandings and interpretations of women's accounts would either not be shared by some of them [participants], and/or represent a form of challenge or threat to their perceptions, choices and coping strategies?" (Kelly *et al.* 1994:37)

To somewhat mediate this, I began to discuss with informants their potential reaction to my interpretation of the findings. In particular I told them that they may not like, or even agree with, my interpretation of their narratives. I suspect this is a dilemma for many researchers.

# PART TWO: IDEALS OF MODERNITY and LOVE

In the following chapters I describe the findings as they relate to 'ideals'. In particular in Chapters Four and Five I describe how informants understand modernity and class. This is important because these concepts have been linked by informants (and within the wider literature) with changes in marriage and intimate relationships. This discussion of class identity and anxiety yields material that later helps explain how ideals of love are partly shaped by the desire to be modern and not 'backward' or 'lower class'.

Then in Chapters Six and Seven I describe in detail what kinds of ideals informants have about their relationships and future relationships, and to what extent these coincide with previously described ideologies of 'companionate marriage'. The focus is then on the kinds of aspirations and desires informants have around social mobility and relationships. Later in Part Three I will discuss the implications of these desires.

# Chapter Four: The making of the new middle class in Baroda, Gujarat

On a bright Monday morning I was on my way to meet Durish for our first interview. As I made my way to the café he had chosen, I reflected on how we had first met. It happened by chance in a local mall when I saw Durish walking around with a foreign girl and a small group of his friends. They approached me, thinking I suppose that two foreigners might want to meet one another. The 'foreigner' was a Finish undergraduate anthropology student who was in Baroda on a study exchange with the local university. Durish and his friends had volunteered to show her around the city, although Durish himself studied biology. It seemed the 'mall' was not what the student had been expecting of India; she confessed she had had a different idea of the country before coming here. The boys were delighted with her reaction, complaining about the negative portrayal of a 'poverty stricken' India abroad and extolling the virtues of modern India as they swept their hands around the new department store.

The store, or mall as it was referred to by my informants, was called Vadodora[65] Central (VC). It had been constructed within the last year on a non-descript road in the 'new' part of Baroda, where other malls had also popped up in the last few years. These malls stand testament to the economic boom experienced in Baroda over the past ten years, escalating in the last five. During my fieldwork alone six supermarkets, two malls, and the first hypermarket opened. The new, expensive outlets rely heavily on the wealthy elite of the city and the trade of returning 'NRIs' (Non Resident Indians).[66] But everyone in Baroda agreed that 'VC' was the best and the most luxurious. VC looks like any other large department store in the UK – a concrete block plastered in advertisements. At the entrance guards look over the would-be customers ensuring only the right sort of person enters. Once past the guards, the customer enters a climate controlled space full of the latest fashions, accessories, and household items. Many of the young people I knew rarely bought anything in VC, they simply walked around in groups, observing and commenting on the items on sale.

At that time of our first meeting I had told Durish and his friends about my study and Durish had seemed keen to take part (he was the only one with relations in the UK). We had exchanged cell phone numbers and agreed to meet again soon. Now, two months later I was finally getting around to meeting him. He had chosen Café Coffee Day (CCD) for our first interview. CCD is an upmarket air-conditioned café, charging around 40-50 rupees for a coffee, while on the street

[65] The store name refers to the city of Baroda whose name was changed to Vadodara in 1974. I continue to use the name 'Baroda' when referring to the city as my informants did.
[66] 'Non Resident Indian' refers to those of Indian descent who live abroad.

outside a coffee can be bought for just four rupees. With the loud music and juke box, CCD is designed to appeal to the young. According to the CCD website: “the café is a meeting place for 15-29 year olds, both male and female […]: teen-agers form 25% of our customers while 38% of the customers are between 20 and 24 years and another 23% belong to the age group of 25-29 years. Students and young professionals comprise around 72% of our customers” (Cafe Coffee Day 2009). As with VC, many young people seemed to buy little; I often saw couples or groups sharing one drink.

In the first interview with informants I normally discussed growing up, family, friends, and sometimes experiences of relationships. Durish was a talkative fellow and pretty much led the interview himself. He was eager to talk about his favourite ‘metro’ Bombay (Mumbai), where he had lived for some years during his teens. He liked to compare it to Baroda, a medium sized city of almost two million, which failed to live up to his standards of a modern Indian city. Durish portrayed himself as the ultimate urban modern man, in comparison to some of his less modern friends. When I pressed him about what ‘modern’ might mean, he told me:

> *The way you talk and you know, make itself, you can see that that person is modern. Even if you talk to a person from a big city you'll get to know that that person is from a big city. Easily! It's like keep a Barodian and keep a person from a big city like Bangalore or Bombay and you will see the difference. Difference in how you present yourself and the way you carry yourself. It's not only the way if I present myself very modern and I don't go with that you know, lifestyle, if my lifestyle is so modern then only I will wear such dresses but some people here they just show that they are too modern but they don't behave like that, their lifestyle is completely like small cities.*

For Durish, clearly a modern identity is only compatible with an urban lifestyle. According to Durish, while some people look modern their behaviour was not ‘really’ modern. A modern outlook was normally signified by clothes; in particular women wore western style clothes such as skirts, strappy tops and so on. Such clothes made him feel that she would have less ‘restrictions’ and would be able to mix freely with boys. But Durish complained that even these ‘modern’ looking girls don't have much freedom, not even being able to *“go out after nine”.* This had created some confusion and embarrassment for Durish who had tried to make friends with girls in his school. In one particular case, he rang a girl *“for study purposes”* but she told him to never call again as her parents did not allow her to have friendships with boys.

Nonetheless, Durish was not advocating pre-marital sexual relationships. He knew that this was *“normal”* in the UK, a country he considered *“too open*”:

> *So it's a difference, again broad mindedness, over there [UK] it's too open, because it's the culture over there. It's not a big thing, even if two people live together it's not a big thing.*

*[…] I believe when people just live together and they don't get married, such people are really not sure about each other cause only one thing would be there in their mind.*

In this extract Durish explains that 'living together' before marriage, or avoiding marriage altogether is unacceptable to him. In particular he seems to suggest that people in co-habiting relationships are more motivated by sex than by commitment. In later interviews he told me that virginity was his number one priority in finding a wife. He associated sex before marriage with *"people from poor areas"* – his area is a *"proper area"* of middle class people.

The second issue Durish had with 'foreign countries' was their attitude to family. He told me that family was his *"number one priority"* and that he would continue to live with and support his parents and grandparents (if still alive) even after he got married.

*I know many people in other countries they just leave their houses at the age of eighteen and they want to settle because, a lot of reasons, some are career oriented, some are just . don't like that their parents interfere too much. These are actually to me very small reasons . those are your parents and if they interfere it's fine, your duty is just to explain them!*

Durish felt that family should be given a stronger priority than personal career or other issues. He went on to tell me that the demise of the family in western and westernised countries was due to women's career aspirations. He cited Japan as a worst-case-scenario where women weren't even having children anymore because they thought their career was more important.

## *4.1 The 'new middle class'*

Durish is a classic example of what recent scholars have referred to as the 'new middle class' (e.g. Das 2002; Fernandes 2006). The 'new middle class' is a group which came out of the economic liberalisation policies of India in the early 1990s. A predominantly urban group, it is comparable to the white-collar, new middle classes in the West (Beteille 2003). Previously the middle classes in India were affiliated with civil service jobs or the professions (Bardhan 1989), but with economic liberalisation came more jobs in the private sector and this group now entails entrepreneurs, business men, and IT and financial professionals (Fuller and Narasimhan 2007:122, 125-6).

However, the term 'new middle class' not only refers to the new occupations which make up this group, but also the 'project' or 'discourse' within which members of this group engage. As Fernandes explains 'new' refers to "the process of production of a distinctive social and political identity that represents and lays claim to the benefits of liberalisation" (Fernandes 2006:xviii). She argues that the new middle class is portrayed as the social group which is able to negotiate the global economy of India "in both cultural and economic terms" (Fernandes 2000:90). While before

the middle classes, influenced by Ghandi Nehru politics, were implicated in discourses around tradition and austerity, they are now associated with upward mobility, globalisation, and consumerism (Srivastava 2004).

The media in particular popularises this image of the new modern Indian middle class. Marketing firms have targeted the middle classes through images of a hyper consumerist cosmopolitan lifestyle, associating 'modern' with the possession and accumulation of consumer goods (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995; Oza 2001). For example, while I was in Baroda the first 'hypermarket' opened. Over the store name a large photo showed a young couple shopping together in the market with the words 'Taste the World' written above in English and Gujarati (see Figure 4.1). Here the hypermarket appeals to the image of a young prosperous couple, shopping together seemingly as a past time, the tag line inferring the cosmopolitan nature of this project.

Figure 4.1: A sign above the hypermarket reads in English and Gujarati 'Taste the World', beside a photograph of a young couple shopping for groceries together.

While there are differences in India amongst the middle classes in terms of caste, language and religion (Beteille 2003:71), a broad scope of the literature shows that in various different parts of

India, middle class men and women have similar concerns around modernity and what it means to be a 'modern' Indian (Donner 2008). As I expand on below, many of these concerns centre on gender, family, and marriage. In this chapter then I discuss in what ways my informants engaged with these debates on 'new middle classness' and what it means in Baroda to be 'middle class'. In the following section though, I first provide a brief description of the setting and of my 'main informants' in Baroda.

## *4.2 Introduction to informants and setting*

Baroda is part of the so-called 'golden corridor' of Gujarat, having experienced economic growth almost on a par with Bangalore in the south. It is the most industrialized state in India producing 20% of the country's total industrial output. The literacy rate stands at around 70% (Gujarat Government Website 2008). This is lower than many states in the south but above average for northern states in India. In 2001 around 40% of the population lived in urban areas, thought to have significantly increased since then. Baroda is situated in the south eastern part of Gujarat. The city itself is divided into a 'new' and 'old' section. My fieldwork primarily took place in the more prosperous new section. This area has more open spaces and parks, large department stores and multiple cafés. New buildings and 'societies' have proliferated here, even over the course of my fieldwork. Such economic growth has been noted in other areas of India, most notably in Calcutta, Delhi, and Mumbai.

All of my main informants in Baroda lived in the 'new' wealthier sections of the city. Like Durish described above, they self-identified as 'middle class' and aspired to a 'modern' identity. As discussed briefly in the last chapter, all but one had a university education and all were drawn from the top three caste groups, though primarily from the Vaishya caste group (see Table 3.1 in Chapter Three).

**Aditya** (Male, Gujarati Jain)[67]

Aditya is married to **Geet.** He describes their marriage as an arranged marriage. Before marrying he lived in Mumbai for five years after finishing his first degree. While there he says he had a lot of fun and 'time pass' relationships (short-term flings). He portrays himself as a fun-loving kind of person, partying often with Geet and his friends. He drinks alcohol but does not smoke. He comes from a relatively wealthy family who own a large house in an affluent part of Baroda. He has two older brothers who are also married. He and Geet live with his parents and his brother and sister-in-law. His other brother lives abroad. Aditya works in the family business with his

[67] After each name I state the sex and the self defined caste of the informant. Aditya told me specifically that he was 'Gujarati Jain' as opposed to 'Kutchi Jain' like his wife. This is primarily a geographical difference.

brother and father. He describes his father as the 'head of household' who manages the family business as well as the home finances. Thus Aditya does not have an independent income, though he says he is given plenty of 'pocket money' from his father and he has his own motorbike. Aditya and Geet have a one-year-old baby. They are the 'cousins'[68] of Lona and Sohan (UK informants).

**Geet** (Female, Kutchi Jain)

Geet is married to **Aditya.** Their marriage was arranged by a common family friend. Before moving to live with Aditya's family, Geet lived with her family in Mumbai. Geet was the only informant in Baroda who did not have a university education. She told me she was not very academic and preferred to have fun at school. She is not very good at English but encouraged by Aditya she did all the interviews with me through English. Geet has a diploma in fashion design and Aditya has said he will 'allow her' to work once their baby is old enough. She shares the housework with her sister and mother-in-law. Aditya and Geet are the 'cousins' of Lona and Sohan (UK informants).

**Durish** (Male, Kshatriya (Lohana))

Durish was 21 at the time of our interviews. As I described above, he was studying biology in the local university when I met him. Durish had lived in Mumbai for some years during his teens before moving to Baroda again with his parents. Now he lives with his parents, grandparents, and his brother and sister-in-law in a flat in a 'proper area' (as he calls it). Durish's parents had a love marriage and thus he told me that he had less 'restrictions' than other people. At the time of the interviews he was dating a Polish girl who was studying in Baroda. His parents know about the relationship but would prefer Durish to marry a Gujarati girl. He has his own motorbike. Durish would like to live abroad in the future.

**Hiren** (Male, Vaishya (Khadayata))

Hiren is married to **Swati.** They describe it as an arranged marriage, facilitated by a matrimonial website. He works in the family business and lives with his parents and his wife. Hiren comes across as quite conservative. He is strongly against love marriage and speaks very pragmatically about his relationship with Swati and how he chose her; he says he liked her mix of traditional and modern outlook, but most importantly he likes that she is family oriented. He tells me that he and Swati eat dinner with his parents every night and they have no television in their bedroom since his parents believe this reduces family togetherness. Nonetheless, he describes himself and his family as 'modern'.

[68] As described in Chapter 3, in India 'cousin' is a lose term used to refer to family friends as well as family kin. Aditya and Geet were family friends of Lona and Sohan's rather than blood relatives.

**Swati** (Female, Vaishya (Patel))

Swati is married to **Hiren.** Swati spoke excellent English and worked in a cell phone company. Although she worked full time, she explained that as the woman her priority is the home. Every morning at 5am she prepares the breakfast and lunch for all the family and comes home from work by 5pm to prepare the evening meal. Swati spoke very romantically about her marriage to Hiren and especially about their engagement period. She has travelled abroad with her work and has her own scooter.

**Jambli** (Female, Brahman)

Jambli is married to **Nilesh**. She met Nilesh in university and was friends with him when he proposed to her. She says at first she was 'scared' to accept his proposal but she had strong feelings for him so eventually she accepted. Her mother discovered their relationship when she saw them both hugging on a motorbike. At first her parents were very against the relationship but she managed to convince them, mostly because Nilesh and his family are well educated and financially secure. Jambli was working part-time at the time of the interviews; she and Nilesh were saving money to move out of his parents' home where she feels 'restricted'. Jambli had poor English and thus her interviews were conducted in Gujarati and Hindi with an interpreter.

**Nilesh** (Male, Vaishya (Patel))

Nilesh is married to **Jambli.** He told me that he wanted to marry Jambli because he felt that she would get on well with his family. He also said he wanted to choose his own wife from outside his caste because the women in his caste are from rural areas and are too traditional; they wear saris all the time and most of them are not educated. Nilesh is a very quiet man – in contrast to Jambli who is very confident and chatty. Despite his pronouncements on the importance of Jambli's 'family' outlook, he came across as very romantic in the interviews. He told several stories about his love for Jambli; in one he told me Jambli was very sick in hospital and while unconscious she kept calling his name. He was also very concerned to give all the 'correct' details in the interviews thus he frequently revisited topics, fleshing them out with more detail. He works in IT and has his own motorbike.

**Kareena** (Female, Jain)

Kareena is single. She lived in the UK for five years after graduating from university. She describes herself and her family as 'Britishy'. By this, she explains, she comes from a very modern and liberal family. Her parents had a love marriage, as did her grandparents and she is expected to have one too. Her parents place very few 'restrictions' on her. She has had boyfriends, one of whom she almost married. Since she lived and worked in the UK, she has her

own money but she continues to live at home, which she prefers. She works in finance and has her own scooter. Kareena is a cousin of Renu (UK informant).

**Krishna** (Male, Sindi)

Krishna was a student in the local university. Unusually, his parents are divorced and he was brought up by his father and aunt. I understood that his father became an alcoholic after the divorce and thus his family were quite short of money. Krishna appeared to be quite affected by his parents' divorce and vowed never to have an arranged marriage as his parents did. He told me he had been in love twice; both times unrequited. Unlike my other informants who all had a scooter, motorbike, or car, Krishna had a bicycle.

**Lena** (Female, Brahman)

I met Lena at a Navratri *garba* in Baroda. She was very enthusiastic about the study because she has had a 'love marriage' and because she is interested in 'promoting Indian culture'. She is a professional dancer and medical doctor. She met her husband through a common friend when she was studying in university. He immediately began to pursue her for marriage but she describes herself as a 'simple' kind of girl, and thus she was reluctant to marry him. Eventually he managed to convince her, but their parents were unhappy, particularly her husband's parents. Nonetheless, they went ahead with the marriage. Afterwards she moved in with her in-laws but because they treated her badly, she and her husband eventually moved out. Lena was the person who most adhered to a 'traditional' image of herself, though at the same time she works full time and has a love marriage. Her husband did not take part in the study; she told me he was too busy.

**Muktha** (Female, Tailor)

Muktha was studying an MSc in Science when I met her. She had had one boyfriend before, whom she had hoped to marry, but ultimately he ended the relationship. While Muktha spent considerable time in her interviews on the importance of 'love', she also came across as very concerned about money and status. She spoke at length about how much her and her brother's education cost and her expectations of her future earning husband. She ideally wanted to marry a UK or US based Indian. She had never been abroad but longed to live there. She felt life was easier abroad and married couples more egalitarian. She lived with her family in a large semi-detached house and had her own scooter.

**Nirali** (Female, Vaishya (Leva Patil))

Nirali was a very confident and talkative young woman. She had had several proposals for marriage, which she delighted in relating during interviews. She refused all these proposals

because she was more interested in her studies and felt she was too young for marriage. As an only child, she said she felt obliged to look after her parents, both practically and financially. At the time of the last interview she had just been accepted to a university in the UK to study a postgraduate degree in nursing. Six months after I left India, she sent me an email saying she had had an arranged marriage to a second generation Indian. She had her own scooter.

**Priya** (Female, Vaishya (Patel))

Priya had an arranged marriage to Bipin. Priya's parents owned and lived over a small grocery store. Relative to my other informants, Priya appeared to have less disposable income. She had her own scooter but rarely went to coffee shops such as CCD and wore primarily unbranded clothes. She was just starting a PhD and was hoping to delay having children until after she had finished her degree. She told me her husband was supportive of this, but her parents-in-law wanted her to become a school teacher. At the time of the interviews she was living alone with her husband but they were due to move in with her husband's parents soon. Priya was one of my closest friends in Baroda, though her English was poor. During recorded interviews we had an interpreter present. Her husband Bipin did not take part, she told me he was too shy.

**Rahul** (Male, Jain)

I met Rahul in my weekly dance class when he volunteered to take part in the study. He comes from a very wealthy family and had travelled quite extensively in Europe. He went to university in Mumbai where his grandparents lived but now he lives in Baroda with his parents, working in the family business. He had had one short relationship and at the time of the interviews told me he was in love with a friend of his. He had confessed his love to her but she was not sure that she was ready for marriage. Rahul drank alcohol and ate meat, despite being a Jain.[69] He had his own car.

**Rekha** (Female, Ismaili Muslim)

Rekha was studying pharmacy in a nearby university. She was the only Muslim who took part in the study in India. She came from a modest background and lived in a small flat in a Muslim part of Baroda with her parents and sister. She was a very serious young girl, and dedicated to her studies. She was determined to work after marriage and wanted to live in a nuclear house so as to avoid the 'burden' of living with in-laws. She had never had a boyfriend and preferred to have an arranged marriage, though she was open to meeting someone of the same religious background and then 'arranging' a marriage with her parents. She spoke excellent English and had her own scooter.

[69] Jains are typically very strict vegetarians.

Figure 4.2: A new Nike store opens on RC Dutt road in the 'new' part of Baroda

**Seeta** (Female, Vaishya (Leva Patil))

Seeta and I lived together in a Paying Guest House and later in a rented apartment. She was going out with a boy of a different caste, Ajay, whom she had met when she was studying for a masters in the UK. Her parents had used their life savings to send her to the UK to study, hoping that she would stay on there and earn money to send home. However, she left the UK when she was unable to find work after her masters. At the time of our meeting she was preparing for her entrance exams to a university in the US where she planned to do another masters. This time her American uncle would fund the degree. While I was living with Seeta, she and Ajay told their parents about their relationship. Seeta's parents were very upset but eventually agreed to their marriage on the condition that they moved to the US together. Ajay came from a wealthy and well educated family. He did not participate as a 'main informant' since he is not Gujarati.

**Tarun** (Male, Vaishya (Patel))

Tarun appeared to come from a lower middle class background. He grew up outside Baroda in a town of about 20,000 people and at the time of the interviews was renting a very small two room flat with a friend. Tarun works as a scientist in a factory in Baroda. He had an arranged marriage

some months before our interview but he was living alone while his wife finished her masters in Ahemedabad. Tarun had poor English but insisted that he did not want an interpreter at the interviews. He had his own motorbike.

**Toni** (Male, Vaishya (Leva Patil))
I first met Toni at a *garba*. He was standing by the drinks stall smoking a cigarette with a big group of male friends. He wore very fashionable and expensive clothes and had his own car and motorbike. His parents were clearly quite wealthy. He worked in the family business and lived with his family. At the time of the interviews he was looking for a wife and claimed to have met over fifty different women through marriage introductions, most of them via a matrimonial website. Previous to this, he had had several 'time pass' (short term or fling) relationships. His parents were open to him choosing his own wife but he said he had never met anyone he wanted to marry so he preferred to go for an arranged marriage.

## *4.3 Middle classness in Baroda*

As alluded to in Chapter Three, I draw on Bourdieu's theory of 'cultural capital' in understanding how middle classness is represented and portrayed in Baroda. According to Bourdieu cultural resources, such as taste and skills, are associated with a particular class. People use these "symbolic goods… in strategies of distinction" (Bourdieu 1984:66). That is, in order to set themselves apart from lower class groups, informants show that their 'taste' is particular to the middle class. According to Bourdieu, the acquisition of cultural capital depends on "total, early, imperceptible learning, performed within the family from the earliest days of life" (1984:66). However, in Baroda the meaning of middle classness has changed in the last twenty years and hence there is some divergence between older and younger generations in its meaning and performance. Furthermore some parents will not have grown up as middle class but will have risen up the social ranks through economic advancement (the 'new middle class'). Thus we can see a certain strategising amongst my informants who consciously lay claim to a middle class identity and who are in the processes of working out what this means.

One area which has received a lot of attention in the literature is the consumption practices of the new middle classes. As mentioned above, before the middle classes were associated with austerity, but the young people I came across were more concerned with displaying their wealth through buying brand marked goods and hanging out in 'malls'. While many did not buy anything in the mall, nonetheless, there required a certain sense of ownership in order to feel comfortable enough to get past the guards who manned the doorways. Equally, the choice of Café Coffee Day over a chai stall outside is pertinent. This café where I met Durish was a popular haunt

amongst my informants. Not only are these cafés more expensive, but they also signify a cosmopolitan outlook, with lattes and cappuccinos the preferred choice of coffee. Phadke argues that these cafés create "a global western space" which clients use to separate themselves from the "parochial cultural context" found outside (Phadke 2007:1514). That is, customers use these cafés as a means to associate themselves with a progressive ethos of a globalised India, distancing themselves from the more 'traditional' and 'backward' India outside the door.

But as noted by Van Wessel in her study on consumption practices in Baroda, while consumption is seen as a means to legitimate status, consumer culture is also thought by some to be lacking in morality (Van Wessel 2004). I found this to the case with older informants, who often came into conflict with my young informants. Here Priya and Jambli describe their difficulties with their parents-in-law:

> *Priya: She [Mother-in-law] tells me that 'be simple, if you want to study, study, if you want to do job, do job but be simple and if you want to stay at home also, there is no problem.' So I changed myself according to that, in this way.*
> *KT: Okay, what does 'be simple' mean?*
> *P:* [Speaks Gujarati]
> *Interpreter: Not to go for shopping, if you want to buy something, don't / spend*
> *P: /*[Speaks Gujarati]
> *Int: much*
> *P:* [Speaks Gujarati]
> *Int: Like, if you have one bag, then you don't need more, then you shouldn't buy more, if you have four dresses, don't buy five or six, buy how many you need and not any extra.*
> **Priya (F)[70] and Interpreter (F), India**

> *Jambli: We* [husband and I] *like eating food in restaurants and eating out rather than cooking and house made food. And my in-laws, especially my father-in-law, don't like this, he is very health conscious so he doesn't like us to take food from outside. But we have this habit so some how or other we make an excuse and do this. So we go out at least twice per week and eat this food. And if they came to know then they will scold us and then I get angry on Nilesh, because he can't* [should] *tell them that now we are married we can do what we want since we are earning!* **Jambli (F) translated by interpreter, India**

Few young people aspired to a more 'simple' image of themselves; those who had the resources hung out in VC or cafés such as CCD.

[70] (F) refers to female, (M) to male

Besides being more consumer oriented than the older generation, my young informants also described themselves as more 'forward thinking' and 'adjustable' to modern Indian society. As Geet explains:

> *They [parents] have a typical mentality that me and Aditya [husband] doesn't have. We are practical, we have to adjust each day and everyday, each time. We think forward, so it's fine it's done fine fine, go ahead.* **Geet (F), India**

Like the older generation, people in rural areas were also thought of as unable to adapt to the new economic globalised space that is modern India.

> *Toni: Those people, [in rural areas] their lifestyle, they can't adjust. Bombay is a different city, Pune is a different city. They [rural people] are living in the 18th century there, people are not that, they are not growing there, they have stopped the growth of the kind, you know what I mean to say?* **Toni (M), India**

In addition, the young people I came across rejected Ghandian austerity and politics as 'old fashioned' and out of date. Many young people I came across blamed Ghandi and Nehru for the lack of economic development in India. For them the 'new' India is one which is open to the global market, and they were keen to see India as the next 'super power'.[71]

Perhaps because of the young age of my informants, autonomy and freedom for young people, and in particular for women, was a topic given a lot of time and importance in interviews. Informants repeatedly emphasised how modern and forward thinking they were by the lack of 'rules' and 'restrictions' in their house, the trust their parents had in them, and their ability to do as they pleased. As can be seen in the following extracts:

> *KT: And would you be allowed to go out late at night?*
>
> *Rahul: When I was in school I did not used to go out late at night but after I came in college, then also we did not go out much late at night and even if I have to go nobody tells me anything. Like on weekends we have party but otherwise I am at home. Daily I go out and come back from factory at 7.30 p.m. in the evening and then you are tired so do not feel like going out. My Dad only tells me, "why are you like this? Why don't you go out?!". He said that at your age we used party so much the whole night so he only pushes me out.* **Rahul (M), India**

> *KT: Does that mean that when your parents say to you 'be home by ten p.m.' that you think you don't want to be home by /ten?*
>
> *Nirali: /No, they won't say me. They always think I will be home after 11 and I always come home at around ten! They say to me, 'why you left the party!?' I say 'the party is over, why*

[71] Not only have the new middle classes rejected 'Ghandian' policies, but Hansen argues that middle class concerns over economic growth and jobs have been linked to the rise of right wing Hindu political parties, such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) (Hansen 1999).

*can't I come home now?!' They say 'oh, it's over now? We thought it will be over at eleven!' They never stop me from doing anything, they are always very frank with me.* **Nirali (F), India**

This was contrasted with other more 'backward' families who treated their children *"like caged animals"*:

*In some places, like you are in a cage, you are em grounded for, you can't see a boy and you can't do this and that so, so people here, they are so backward, when I see them, I respect them, that's no problem, but they need to go out and see that the world has changed and you need to be compatible with it, you need to change as well, you can't be just okay, if you don't want to change, don't impose that on your kids at least!* **Kareena (F), India**

As we can see from Kareena's extract, the rules imposed by parents, such as not letting daughters have male friends, is a 'backward' mentality. According to my informants, these kinds of parents have not adjusted to the new world in which Baroda finds itself.

As I shall expand on in further chapters, lack of restrictions and 'freedom' included autonomy in choosing a future spouse. Relationships and young women's ability to mix with members of the opposite sex, to socialize and go out, were associated with values of modernity. Some scholars have attributed these changes to global media now available to Indian middle class consumers (e.g. Dell 2005; Puri 1997). In the popular 'western' media and increasingly in Bollywood stories, romantic spontaneous love affairs are often deemed essential to spouse selection whereas in India, arranged marriage remains the norm. Furthermore, this romantic love is often associated in films with modern, urban, middle class lifestyles (Donner Forthcoming). Puri's (1997) analysis of Harlequin and Mills & Boon readers in India, however, showed that her participants learned and honed their expectations of romance, sexuality and ideal marriage from these books, but experienced a form of social anxiety due to the difference between the choices and lives of the heroines and those open to themselves (Puri 1997).[72]

I have shown that the young people I came across in Baroda have similar ideals to the 'new' middle classes described elsewhere. In particular they were concerned with consumption practices which portrayed them as modern. Beteille (1996) has argued that wealth has become a more important means for social mobility and status since economic liberalisation. In Gujarat some wealthier middle castes are achieving comparable social respectability to upper castes as the economic gap between middle castes and upper castes closes (Desai 2008). If we look at my informants, we can see that majority came from the Vaishya group, the lowest of the 'twice born' caste groups. In fact Gujarat has a high proportion of Vaishya subcastes, who may well be more

[72] See Banaji (2006) for a discussion on the difficulties of measuring the influence of media on understandings of sexuality and gender.

invested in status attainment through economic advancement than caste. Then it is not surprising that my informants stressed the importance of wealth and a 'modern' outlook in attaining status. It is in the interests of the middle caste groups to embrace such an ideology. Nonetheless, as I shall discuss in the next section this embrace of 'modernity' and consumption did not translate into a desire for 'western' culture.

### *4.4 Modernisation not westernisation*

While young people aspire to a modern identity, which many associate with progress and economic development, this is not to say that they embrace 'western' culture. As with Durish, young people in Baroda are disparaging of what they perceive as the low value placed on family in the 'West'.

> *People out there* [in 'western' countries'] *are not very keen on, what we say, you know understanding each other or be with family members or be in a group. They believe in, they think about themselves, I don't know, I am maybe wrong. This is what I, ah, because my friend stays in U.S. and he has the same type of experience. The kind of help and support and kind of attachment that we have here, it's not there. The only thing they miss out there is family friends, togetherness.* **Aditya (M), India**

> *My son wants to bring up his children here in India, in the UK both parents must work and people send their kids to boarding school, it is not a good place for family.* **Dr Patel (Male Matchmaker), India**

The individualisation of western society, or other economically developed countries such as Japan, was associated with women's career aspirations and thus less emphasis on the family. Even when, as shown above, the position of women was seen as a key signifier of development and modernity, her participation in the labour market is also associated with 'family breakdown'. This leads to an ambiguous view of modernisation as both the bearer of economic prosperity and progress, and as emblematic of all that is 'wrong' with western society.

Furthermore, even if status is increasingly associated with economic wealth and 'modern' values, middle class culture has been substantially influenced by traditional upper caste ideology.[73] In particular we saw this with Durish when he emphasised the continued importance of virginity before marriage. The 'new middle class' culture in Baroda is influenced both by contemporary media portrayals of 'modernity' and progress, and more traditional ideals of appropriate upper caste behaviour.

[73] And the upper castes are predominantly represented in this new middle class group (Deshpande 2003; Fernandes 2006).

## *Conclusion*

I have shown that informants in India were keen to demonstrate their modernity, but this did not turn into an indiscriminate acceptance of 'western' individualistic values. Traditional discourses of 'respectability' and the 'family' associated with upper caste values and what it means to be 'Indian' still hold significance. There seems to be an ambiguous relationship then to modernisation which is both alluring and repelling, particularly with regards to the position of women. Informants want to be seen to be modern, associated with a middle class identity, but are suspicious of moves towards a more 'individualistic' society. In Chapter Six I will consider how these notions of modernity and class interact with ideals of love and marriage.

# Chapter Five: The making of the modern cosmopolitan British Indian

*Rama: I think because I'm, I find myself different to other Gujaratis or young Gujaratis that I know who have grown up in London because they've been surrounded by loads of Indians growing up and I haven't. And I think that the place where you grow up, even within London, if you're surrounded by loads of Indians you're different from somebody who grew up not surrounded by loads of Indians. So that's why I felt it, where I grew up has had a big factor on who I am really.*

*KT: So how would you be different to people who have grown up in areas with lots of Indians?*

*R: I find them to be a little bit more close minded about things, about non Indians and more into their crappy Indian television dramas which are just . horrendous to watch really. … I've got more freedom as well. .. I think the ones who've grown up surrounded by each other .. they end up having Indian accents almost, they copy their parents' accents and what they hear around them most because they're surrounded by it all the time. … Yeah, that sort of thing.*

*KT: What do you mean by close minded?*

*R: They often are, are stuck to their mentality about . you know being the best and being "oh well we'll stick to us" and not integrating with other, with people from different ethnic backgrounds.* **Rama (F), UK**

## *Introduction*

In this Chapter I discuss in what ways my informants understood and portrayed their ethnicity and class to me. As we can see in the extract from Rama, a key issue to emerge was around being an integrated Indian, one who would integrate with people from different ethnic backgrounds. I will expand on this below, but first I provide some background into Indians and Gujaratis living in Britain.

There are around 1.1 million Indians in Britain, making them the largest ethnic minority group in the country; Indians make up 23% of the ethnic minority population and around 2% of the total UK population (Office of National Statistics 2007). Approximately half of the British Indian population are of Gujarati origin (Bhachu 1986). The most common religion amongst Gujaratis is Hindu, with a smaller number of Muslim and Jain background. Indian Hindus in Britain have similar levels of educational and occupational attainment to the white majority in Britain, in contrast to

Bangladeshi and Pakistani groups which have one of the lowest attainments when compared to other ethnic groups (Performance and Innovation Unit 2002; Brown 2000; Dale *et al.* 2002). In fact Gujaratis are regarded as being a rich and successful ethnic group in the UK. For example, a recent BBC Radio Four documentary claimed that a person born with the name 'Patel' – a common Gujarati surname – is eight times more likely to become a millionaire than a person born with the name 'Smith'.

Such economic success has been attributed to what Ramji (2006) refers to as Gujaratis' "contingent geography". Through examining residence and social networks, reasons of "descent" (culture, religion, language), and "hierarchy" such as caste, class, and education, Ramji attempts to unpick how the Gujarati community came to occupy this relatively high social position (2006 :228).[74] She argues that Gujaratis' experience as 'twice migrants'[75], immigrating from East Africa rather than from India, gave them an advantage in establishing themselves in Britain; Gujarati Indians were 'migration savvy' and more cosmopolitan. Many had discarded the migration 'myth of return', since those that could have returned did so after the Ugandan and Kenyan 'Africanisation'. The mass migration of Gujaratis from Africa also meant that entire families came over at the same time. This, Ramji argues, made it easier to settle, and decreased dependence on the male member of the household as 'interpreter' of English society (Ramji 2006).[76] 'East African' Gujaratis mostly settled in London. Gujaratis that have come directly from India are thought to have achieved slightly less in economical terms, though the data are sketchy (Modood 1992:31).

In terms of Gujarati culture and background most Gujaratis, particularly those that emigrated, are from an urban and medium to high caste background. Migrants do tend to come from 'middling wealth and status' since poorer communities would not be able to raise the money to emigrate (Ballard and Ballard 1977). However, Gujaratis are regarded historically within India as hard-working commercial traders with a long standing experience in migration for economic improvement (Lyon 1973). Gujaratis in East Africa in particular enjoyed a privileged position pre-Africanisation; they were predominantly middle class and wealthy.

## *5.1 Introduction to informants in the UK*

Although my British fieldwork was all undertaken in London, about half my informants grew up in London and half grew up in different areas around England. As we saw from Rama's extract

[74]This is similar to Jayawardena's framework (1968) for factors influencing Indian communities abroad: Causes of and conditions of migration, the background of migrants and the dynamics of the migrant community.
[75] A term borrowed from Bhachu (1985).
[76]Similar migration patterns through East Africa were followed by the Punjabis, the other major Indian migrant group in England ( Ballard and Ballard 1977).

above, where someone grew up was considered an important factor in identity formation and thus I purposively sampled informants who grew up in 'Asian' and 'non-Asian' areas (see Table 3.2 in Chapter Three). However, at the time of the interviews all my informants were living in or around London. As explained in Chapter Three, the 'field' in London was more dispersed than in Baroda. Informants lived in various different parts of London, commuted to other parts for work, and socialised in yet other areas. It is difficult then to describe one 'site'. Some lived in apartments in central London, others lived in semi-detached houses in 'Asian' areas of London (such as around Ealing Road). The latter area contains many Asian restaurants and shops, where many of their customers wear 'traditional' clothes, such as a Sari or Salwar Kameez[77]. The implications of living in an 'Asian' area are discussed in more detail below. First I will give a brief description of each main informant.

**Ameera** (Female, Sunni Muslim)

Ameera was the only Muslim informant in the UK. She is in a love marriage with a Hindu man, **Mahendra.** She grew up in an Asian area outside of London to two *"self-made business"* parents who were brought up in East Africa. She describes them as having struggled to succeed, but are now comfortably well off. She and her sisters are all well educated; Ameera is a medical doctor and appears to be very successful in her field. She says she is religious, but she does not wear a head scarf or other signifier of her faith. Ameera describes herself as 'well balanced' between Indian and British culture. She is critical of arranged marriage systems which she feels are sexist against women. Her parents were completely against her marriage to Mahendra and were not present at the wedding. Ameera was very upset about this but is philosophical in her interpretation of the events; in her view, her parents' 'old' ideas were incompatible with the 'modern' preference for a marriage based on love.

**Mahendra** (Male, Vaishya)

Mahendra is married to **Ameera.** He was born in East Africa but was brought up in the US and UK. He comes from a wealthy family and attended a private boarding in England. He grew up mostly surrounded by white English people and says he longed to meet other second generation Indians who were similar to himself. He met his wife, Ameera, at university. Like Ameera, he kept the relationship secret from his parents until they were both ready for marriage. Mahendra's parents were also against their marriage and did not attend the wedding. He works in business and plans to set up his own company in the future. Mahendra comes across as quite romantic, both about his relationship with Ameera and his Indian culture. He has travelled to India several times and talks extensively in his interviews about his Indian 'roots'.

[77] Pyjama-like outfit

**Darsha** (Female, Vaishya (Potter))

Darsha is married to **Pretak**. They are both from Leicester, a 'Gujarati area' in the north of England. She met Pretak when she was still in school but they only started going out together 'properly' five years ago. Darsha describes her parents as very traditional and strict. When she was young she wasn't allowed out in the evenings or to mix with boys. Her mother is a full-time stay at home mother, and her father is the 'head of the house' who, according to Darsha, makes all the decisions. She is determined to have a different relationship with her husband. Darsha and Pretak have been together for five years but she only told her parents about the relationship after they got engaged. She says this is because they would have forced her to make a decision much earlier and wouldn't have allowed them to live together before marriage. Pretak was her first 'serious' boyfriend. She is a solicitor.

**Pretak** (Male, Sudra (Mochi))

Pretak works in IT and is married to **Darsha.** Previous to meeting Darsha, he had several short and long term relationships and according to Darsha was a 'real player'. His parents are divorced and thus he expresses some scepticism of marriage but feels that it is 'necessary' in the Indian community. He grew up in Leicester, an area with many other Gujaratis. He lived with his mother and sisters and was allowed to do as he pleased. Darsha also says that he never had to do any housework in the house and so is unable and unwilling to do so now.

**Lona** (Female, Vaishya (Patel))

Lona is married to **Sohan.** They described their marriage as a 'love marriage' because they met independently of their parents' help. Lona grew up in a 'white area' outside London. Her parents own a grocery store and, according to Lona, left her and her sisters to do as they pleased. Lona appears to have lived in a relatively wealthy area and attended a well regarded selective grammar school. She says she had very few Indian friends growing up and she 'didn't notice' that she was in any way different to her peers. She studied business at university and now works in the finance sector. Despite earning more than her husband, she plans to give up work after having children.

**Sohan** (Male, Vaishya (Patel))

Sohan is married to **Lona.** He grew up in a white area outside of London. Sohan's father spent half his life in East Africa and half in India before moving to England after his marriage. Sohan's mother came directly from India. He portrays himself as 'laddish', and tells stories about getting into trouble at school and taking recreational drugs. He now works in a bank. During his free time

he goes to the gym and hangs out with friends. Sohan was a 'cousin' of Aditya and Geet in India. Sohan's father also took part in an interview (Mr Patel).

**Naveen** (Male, Sudra (Mochi))

Naveen grew up in a lower middle class 'mixed ethnic' area outside of London. His parents were born in East Africa. He is a student and aspiring writer. Naveen was conscientious and thoughtful in his replies, though he appeared embarrassed and unused to talking about himself. At the time of the interviews he was single but he had had relationships before, one with an older woman. His only sister is married to a black man, which his parents had difficulty accepting. He now feels that he should marry a Gujarati girl so as not to upset them once more. Of all the men interviewed, Naveen came across as the most egalitarian. He describes his mother and sisters as very strong characters and says he would like to have a similarly 'strong' woman as his partner.

**Nihal** (Male, Vaishya (Leuva Patel)

Nihal grew up on a council estate in a mixed ethnic area in the north of England (though his parents owned their own house). He works in a law firm and came across as studious and ambitious. His parents came to England directly from India. He was in his first 'serious' relationship at the time of the interview. His girlfriend was Indian but not Gujarati, which had created some difficulties with his parents. Nihal was born and spent the first two years of his life in India. He has travelled back to India several times to visit family and friends.

**Prity** (Female, Kshatriya (Lohana))

Prity's parents are 'East African Asians'. She grew up in an Indian area in London and is very involved in the Indian community, though she stresses that she has friends from many different ethnic and national backgrounds. She has also lived abroad briefly. Prity's parents had difficulty in accepting her brother's marriage to a white English woman and thus Prity feels that she ought to marry an Indian. She is currently going out with an India-born Indian, but she tells me that he is an 'untypical' Indian and very modern in his outlook. She is a journalist.

**Rama** (Female, Brahman)

Rama's parents are also originally East African Asians. She grew up in a white area in London and feels this was very important in forming her identity and opinions. She is a recent university graduate and currently works as an administrator. I met Rama through a Brahman Youth organisation, but she tells me she *"doesn't care at all"* about caste. She had one serious boyfriend who was Indian, and other short-term relationships with both Indians and non-Indians. She was single at the time of the interviews.

**Renu** (Female, Jain)

Renu grew up in an Indian area in London but distances herself constantly from her peers during interviews. She says her parents are very liberal and open-minded; they had a love marriage to one another, which appears to be a tradition in her father's family. At the time of the interviews she was living with her white English boyfriend, which her parents knew about. She had had several boyfriends before this, all of whom were white. From her Facebook page it appears that the majority of her friends are not Asian, despite growing up in a predominantly Asian area. She works in public relations.

**Yogesh** (Male, Kshatriya (Lohana))

Yogesh's parents were both brought up in East Africa. He grew up in a Gujarati area in Leicester in the north of England. He was introduced to me by another informant (Nihal) who described Yogesh as 'traditional'. Yogesh was going through marriage introductions when I met him. He had never been in a relationship. Unlike other informants in the UK, Yogesh felt that arranged or introduced marriage was better than love marriage. He was also more religious than any of my other informants and had recently joined the Hare Krishnas. He had therefore recently given up drink and had become much stricter in his adherence to vegetarianism. In many things Yogesh was more similar to informants in India than to informants in the UK. Nonetheless, Yogesh saw himself as a 'modern' British Asian, though he admitted that he was more religiously committed than most British Indians. He works in IT.

## *5.2 East African roots and informants' connections to India*

Of my main UK informants six had parents who were born or brought up in East Africa. This history of being 'twice migrants' adds some complexity to the issue around 'Gujaratiness' and a sense of 'transnational subjectivity' (Dahinden 2009). First of all, referring to these informants as 'second generation' is problematic. In using the term in this thesis I refer to their second generation status here in the UK, rather than time since their ancestors left India. If I were to use the latter definition, those six informants would be 'third generation', since it was their grandparents who first left India. These informants told me that their parents felt little connection to India the country and were more attached to East Africa. Naveen, for example, tells me that when he went on holiday to India with his parents they had no interest in visiting Gujarat since they neither had relatives there anymore nor childhood memories of the place. Instead they visited the Taj Mahal.

At the same time, informants believed that their parents 'felt Indian', even if they had grown up in East Africa. As Prity explains:

*They are very proud to be Indian, that is what they are, but they are East African Indians. And there is a difference between East African Indians and Indian Indians in the same way as there is between British Indians and Indian Indians. Eh .. they identify with both cultures very strongly especially my .. eh actually both my parents.* **Prity (F), UK**

As with Baumann's respondents in Southall, informants and their parents identify with many different 'communities' or aspects of their cultural heritage (Baumann 1996). Prity's parents feel both Indian and East African Asian. Prity's parents still visit and have relations in East Africa, as they do in Gujarat. In turn Prity describes herself as second generation East African Asian, though she has never travelled to Uganda (where her parents lived) but she has been to India several times. She also feels 'British Asian'.

Such disparate connections with India left some Indians professing that I was 'more of an expert' on India than they were. They referred to my lengthy stay in India[78] compared to their infrequent or non-existent visits. For this reason many seemed tentative, or told me they felt unqualified to speak about their impressions of life in India which they perhaps had only rarely visited - or never set foot in. I had attempted to probe their impressions of life in India to understand in what way a 'connection' to India, or a sense of 'life in India' might relate to their understandings of what it means to be Indian. Ultimately contemporary life in India seemed to have little significance for UK informants' lives and understandings of 'Indian culture'. Nonetheless, there was a general impression that life in India had 'moved on' considerably since their parents' or grandparents' times. Some even thought that Indians in India were more 'modern' than those in the UK, citing Hindi and Bollywood movies as their resource.

But even as I delineate these two groups of Gujaratis – those who had East African Asian parents and those who did not, or those who had on-going connections with India versus those that did not – to my informants a much clearer delineation was made between those Gujaratis who had grown up in Gujarati or Asian areas and those who had grown up in more mixed ethnic or white English areas. As is clear from my conversation with Rama above, informants thought those in the latter group were more 'modern' 'balanced' British Indians, while those brought up in Gujarati or Asian areas were more 'close minded' and came from stricter more traditional families. The sense was that this latter group have never 'left' India – as Rama notes, they even have *"Indian accents"*.

[78] At the time of my UK fieldwork I had spent almost two years living in India.

### *5.3 Being 'balanced' between British and Indian identities*

Time and again in my interviews with UK-based informants they described the ideal British Indian to which they subscribe. This 'model' citizen is one which takes on the culture of both India and Britain, one who has an 'even balance' between an Indian and British identity. Ameera, who grew up in an 'Asian' area explains:

> *Hopefully, we* [husband and I] *are fairly balanced between Indianess and understanding what it means to be British and all those things as well [...] You get people on the other end of the extreme where they are Indian but .. apart from the colour of their skin embrace everything western. Or you go to the extreme where it's everything Indian. It just so happens that we managed to find like minded people, like backgrounds, careers all of those things which worked quite well and our friends are fairly balanced group of people. There are no extremes.* **Ameera (F), UK**

In addition to making a claim for herself as 'balanced', Ameera points out that her social circle too contains 'like minded people'. These 'balanced' peers, also have similar professional careers – linking 'modern' integrated Indians with occupation and educational achievement. Notice too her reference to 'no extreme' behaviour, alluding perhaps to post 9/11 portrayals of Asians and in particular Asian Muslims as 'extreme'.

Those Asians who do not adapt to British culture are stereotyped as coming from stricter families who limit in particular girls' freedom to socialize and mix with boys. As Lona and Sohan discuss:

> *Lona: But yeah like, my family I guess were, . I wouldn't say they were liberal but . you know, we were allowed, we could go out in the evenings and that was fine. I think we could, to be honest, I think my sister and I could probably do almost what we liked, as long as we performed, like, if got the grades that you always did at school […] Whereas I think talking to the people who did grow up in Indian areas, that was just never done.*
>
> *Sohan: Probably more so for girls as well.*
>
> *L: Yeah, probably more so for girls. But you know. . I'm not sure that my Dad liked it but […] they didn't want to recreate India and sort of live in amongst all of the Indians, I don't think they had any desire to do any of that. So then if you are going to live in a certain way then you have got to be prepared to bring your kids up in that way. […] Like I think they were quite happy to just embrace how everyone lived over here.* **Lona (F) and Sohan (M), UK**

According to Lona her parents didn't try to *"recreate India",* they adapted to living in Britain. This meant bringing up children in a British way. In contrast, the suggestion is that families in Gujarati areas continue to live as if they were in India, restricting girls' movements and limiting young people's socializing.

Such an image of those brought up in Asian areas was reiterated time and again by my informants who described Gujaratis from Indian dominated areas as more 'traditional' and less 'savvy' of British culture. Sohan and Lona told me Gujaratis who come from Leicester (an area with a lot of Gujaratis in northern England) had "*more sheltered upbringings"* and "*stricter parents".* Not only that, but they felt that "*their outlook is different".* In particular, Gujaratis from Leicester are keen to return to Leicester and they feel uncomfortable in a city where they are in the minority, whereas Sohan and Lona profess to *"not even notice"* the race of those around them. Rama says that people who grew up in Asian areas are more *"close minded"* and prefer to *"stick with Asians"*. Other informants stressed the over-emphasis on family amongst Gujaratis from Gujarati areas; this was linked with a lack of autonomy in choice of spouse.

Being brought up in an 'Asian' or Gujarati area then was presented as a disadvantage to which young people needed to 'get over', particularly when the school they attended was also mostly Asian. Darsha was one such informant who was brought up in an 'Asian' area. She described how her parents used to refuse to let her and her sisters out in the evenings, and her father's strict policing of her behaviour. She paints this background as culturally limiting, in particular when she first left home to go to university:

> *It* [university] *was weird for me. Because I had never been in an environment that wasn't Asian dominated. It was a shock. A massive culture shock. […] One time there were – people going up in on the stairs and they were coloured or something. And we lived with a girl from Malaysia who was very strange. […] And then one of the girls in my flat went, "Oh my god! There are foreigners everywhere here isn't it?" And then she turned around and I was just thinking yeah, the same thing. I guess there are a lot of people that are not from England around here. And she goes, "Oh, but I don't mean you." And I took offence to that part because I was like "Why do you think I am foreigner?" But she wasn't saying that, she was clarifying just in case I got offended. So what she was doing was perfectly normal but that's the part I took offence to. And I was like, why should she treat me like I am different? Am I different? And then maybe I had some sort of crisis, I don't know. And then I left, left. I left that flat and I went and lived in this horrible, horrible street in a very Pakistani Islamic area where they don't like girls to be free and do what they like and they didn't like me. […] And slept on some one's floor which sounds crazy to me. But it was, I grew, I totally think Katherine, it was a reaction to having never been allowed out and being all of a sudden free in this wilderness. I was making all the wrong decisions.* **Darsha (F), UK**

Despite growing up in a predominantly Asian area, Darsha clearly felt 'British'. Arriving in university and being confronted with her minority status only then started to make her question her difference or similarity to other British people. In reaction to her flatmate's differentialisation of her, Darsha moves to a 'Pakistani Islamic' area, perhaps thinking she might feel more 'at home'

there. But instead she feels just as, if not more, alienated there. In the end, she puts down her 'culture shock' and 'wrong decisions' to having a sheltered up-bringing in a predominantly Asian area. The insinuation is that by being brought up in this Asian area she was not prepared for the *"wilderness"* of the real world.

Further to this, even as Darsha vilifies the upbringing she had in the Gujarati area she was brought up in, she compares it favourably to the *"horrible street in a very Pakistani Islamic area where they don't like girls to be free and do what they like".* As bad as her area is, a Pakistani Islamic area is far worse. Darsha (and other informants in the UK) not only situate themselves apart from other Gujaratis who have been brought up in what they perceive as too traditional a manner, but they also situate themselves apart from Pakistani Muslims or other more conservative Indians who *"don't like girls to be free"*.

Previous studies of young people of Asian descent in Britain have found informants emphasising their ethnic identity with their interviewers. Song and Parker (1995) observed in their study of young British people of Chinese descent that participants seemed to want to 'prove' their ethnic identity through, for example, their ability to speak Chinese. Ballard and Ballard (1977) argued in their study of second generation British Asians that participants emphasised overt elements of their Indian identity, such as food and clothes, in reaction to the 'white rejection' of them as British. In contrast I found that my informants were unlikely to want to 'prove' their 'Gujaratiness' (or 'Indianess'), but instead were more attached to a cosmopolitan 'modern' identity. For example, in my first interview with Prity she named off the countries and ethnic origins of her diverse group of friends. She contrasted this with 'other' Indians who *"never even leave Ealing".* As we saw from Rama above, and other numerous examples I have cited, informants distanced themselves from Indians who seem 'Indian' (by, for example, having an Indian accent) and who haven't 'adapted' to British life. In addition, many of my informants seemed unphased by their inability to speak Gujarati and joked about a 'foreigner' like me speaking more Gujarati than they did.[79] Informants were more likely to assert this 'balanced' identity than to assert any 'Asian' identity.

### *5.4 Class?*

Unlike in India where social class was frequently mentioned in tandem with a 'modern' and 'broadminded' attitude, in the UK informants were reluctant to even mention the word class. Furthermore, some informants seemed to want to position themselves outside of a 'middle class' Indian grouping, describing those of a more 'privileged' background as parochial:

[79] My ethnicity may have impacted on this data – Song and Parker (1995) certainly argue that their East Asian status seemed to impact on their participants' concern with language and ethnic identity.

*One of my best friends is a dentist, she is in her final year in King's College of dentistry and King's College is predominantly Indian, from north London all from good schools and very, I would tend to call them very processed, very privileged upbringing, very good education and very good schools and eh.. we are from* [area in London] *which is not so good and not so posh. And it's just the attitudes* [of 'privileged girls'] *[…] everyone talks the same, walks the same, their accent, and their professions are all the same.* **Prity (F), UK**

Prity appears to disparage those Indians who take the conventional 'Indian' professional career path (such as dentist, doctor, or accountant), describing them as 'close-minded' and 'unimaginative'. She disassociated herself from such status concerns which the older generation and 'other' Indians engage in. Likewise, many informants claimed to have little or no knowledge of caste differences and felt that second generation Indians were likely to remove these old hierarchies.

At the same time, it was clear that informants were aware of their and their peers' class status, but they came across as reluctant and embarrassed to enter into a discussion about it. Ameera, for example, seems to get herself into knots when discussing the slightly lower class status of a previous boyfriend:

*I think looking back . he wasn't .. he was at university but he didn't do a traditional, he think he did something like business studies … and . and he wasn't a professional and I don't think he was going to be a professional. I even wonder whether that, I mean .. it's academic now but . yeah realistically looking back, that relationship didn't have much of a future because we were quite different. Whilst I was from a comfortable, at that point, my parents built up their wealth but at that point I was from a comfortable middle class family . and he lived in .. sort of a terrace house in the sort of . less savoury area of town. I'm not saying that to be a snob but I'm just saying that practically speaking looking back at . the people that we were, fine I had a, you know I really liked him and I can't really say it was love but I would have liked the relationship to work . in spite of all of those things but really did we have that much in common – is what I'm driving at. .. I don't think the money thing would have been an issue because my parents weren't wealthy as they grew up. Didn't have anything . and I'm sure together we would have been able to come up with, you know living in a nice house, lifestyle. Nothing like this but . decent. .. I wonder how the career thing would have worked? How he would have felt having a wife who was .. God I feel bad just talking about it!* **Ameera (F), UK**

But as we can see with Ameera, even as she distanced herself from discourses on class, worrying that she will sound like a 'snob', she still wanted a partner of a similar educational and occupational background.

### *5.5 Making claim to a cosmopolitan identity*

In recent years Asians in the media have been vilified for their inability to adapt to British culture (Alexander 2002). These debates about the 'incapability' of British Asians to 'integrate' have centred on forced marriage (often confused with arranged marriage) and the position of women in Asian culture. This has been particularly strong in the portrayal of Asian Muslims. Modood, for example, has noted the contrasting image of the Indian 'achiever' with Pakistani and Bangladeshi 'believers' (1992:43). Asian Muslims are portrayed as too traditional, while Indian Hindus have adapted to life in Britain and achieved economic success. In this way culture, in particular Asian (Muslim) culture, is portrayed as an obstacle to progress and integration (Alexander 2002; Modood *et al.* 1997).

While culture may be portrayed as an obstacle to success, informants cannot 'escape' their culture – nor may they want to. My informants note instances of both 'feeling different' and being perceived as different from the white British majority. Even those who told me that they 'didn't even notice' the race of their friends or peers, also stated that they preferred to date Indians citing, as in India, the 'difficulty' of marrying into another culture. For this reason many attended Asian speed dating events, rather than the 'general' speed dating events which were often run by the same companies. Many too – both those who had come from 'Asian' areas, and those who had come from white or more ethnically diverse areas – had primarily Asian friends and confessed seeking out like-minded British Asians in university. Such behaviour, which may seem to echo Indian traditions of 'endogamy', may actually reflect informants' reaction to their perceived rejection by mainstream British society. They are in a situation where they are perceived as British Asian (not just British) in a context where 'Asian culture' is portrayed as inhibitive of progress, integration, and success.

As a result informants portray themselves as apart from 'other communities' or individuals who are 'too traditional'. They depict themselves as knowledgeable of the white English or broader British community and claim to possess the ability to integrate Asian and British aspects of their culture – unlike other Gujaratis and especially unlike Asian Muslims. In this sense, informants lay claim to a cosmopolitan identity of themselves. Being 'cosmopolitan' denotes a "desire for the fluidity of identity" (Binnie and Skeggs 2004:40). Not everyone has the skills for such fluidity:

> "Cosmopolitanism can be a matter of competence, and competence of both a generalised and a more specialised kind. There is the aspect of a state of readiness, a persona; ability to make ones way into other cultures, through listening, looking, intuiting, and reflecting. And there is cultural competence in the stricter sense of the term, a built up skill in manoeuvring more or less expertly with a particular system of meanings." (Hannerz 1996:103)

Binne and Skeggs argue that this ‘competence’ is associated with class status, as a cosmopolitan identity “relies on access to the requisite cultural capital to generate the requisite dispositions” (2004:42). Cosmopolitanism can be seen as a form of `cultural capital' for my informants in the UK.

There is a perception then that only *middle class* Asians can achieve this ‘fluidity of identity’. This point of view has been perpetuated by the media and by politicians:

> “The Hindu community have managed not to be the focal point of bitterness and hatred ... because there's a very much larger middle class, and wherever you have a larger middle class ... then integration, social cohesion go hand in hand ... . And therefore the answer to your question is those areas of inward migration, where people have been struggling at the very bottom end of the economic ladder, that obviously means Bangladeshi and to some extent Pakistani communities, although that is changing....” Interview with David Blunkett in (Uberoi and Modood 2010:312).

David Blunkett explains Asian Hindus ability to integrate successfully into British society by their middle class background. As Binne and Skeggs note, “There are always cosmopolitan losers and winners” (2004:41). Skeggs (2009) argues that the ‘enemy’ of cosmopolitanism is typically portrayed as the white working class. For my informants it seems that ‘traditional’ Asians of a working class background are the ‘enemy’ and thus informants are careful to distance themselves from these kinds of Asians in their interviews with me.

### *Conclusion*

The evidence from Britain suggests that, as in India, young people are concerned about their position as modern middle class Indians. I hypothesise that informants’ projection of themselves as ‘balanced’ is a reaction to portrayals of Asian culture as incompatible with progress and integration. Thus informants lay claim to a ‘cosmopolitan’ identity of themselves and assert their ability to integrate into both British and Asian culture, in opposition to more ‘traditional’ Asians in Britain. Over the next few chapters I will explore to what degree these values of ‘modernity’ impact on informants’ ideals and experiences of courtship, love, and marriage.

# Chapter Six: Appropriate love – ideals of love and relationships in Baroda, India

> *I believe you should only marry someone who is in love with you.* **Krishna (M), India**

> *If he doesn't love me, then . there is no meaning, na? . Everybody wants to marry with some boy or girl who loves him, loves him or her.* **Muktha (F), India**

## *Introduction*

As discussed in Chapter Four, young people in Baroda were concerned about their place in society as 'modern middle class' citizens, but also seemed to have ambiguous feelings about the 'modernisation' of India, especially when this modernisation resembled 'westernisation'. Nonetheless, a key aspect of being 'modern' and 'forward' looking, which informants appeared to be keen to portray, was the ability to socialize with members of the opposite sex and autonomy in choosing a future spouse. In this chapter I expand on how these concerns relate to ideals of love and marriage.

## *6.1 Love as a prerequisite for marriage*

My informants in India – such as Muktha and Krishna – expressed a strong desire to marry someone they love. This was expressed by married and unmarried individuals, by those who had an arranged marriage and those who had a love marriage. In describing love within their relationships and future relationships, informants emphasised a feeling of 'attachment' and 'bonding'.

> *Lena: Sometimes I go to visit* [parents] *and stay there for one two days and he* [husband] *is, he feels very uneasy without me, and that's, that's thing, like, he is so much attached to me and he can't take his life without me as I can't, I can't take all these things for granted, I can't think my life without him so. This is one way, a successful marriage.* **Lena (F), India**

> *KT: Okay, and what do you think is a successful marriage, what do you think that means?*
> *Nilesh: [Speaks Gujarati]*
> *Int: The qualities I am looking for is attachment* [sathe] *to each other, in every walk of life. There should be a kind of bonding where she should be able to relate my problem to her problem. So she should not let me out, if I am going through a bad patch in life, she should be able to just, make him go through it. She should force him, "no it can be done." So it's*

*attachment and emotional support to make a good marriage.* **Nilesh (M) and Interpreter (M), India**

Not only was love considered necessary in the selection of a spouse, but it was also considered an essential criterion of a 'successful marriage'. 'Success' in terms of children and occupational advancement was sometimes mentioned too, but this tended to be mentioned in parallel to the 'heart' of the relationship:

*KT: Can you tell me what do you think is a successful marriage?*

*[5 second pause]*

*Hiren: Successful marriage. Both person should have . by heart* [in love] *on the 25th wedding anniversary.*

*KT: Okay*

*H: If you living in joint family, if you have good children, if you are well, good house, good car, peace of mind – then it is a successful marriage.* **Hiren (M), India**

*Successful marriage? Em… .. two people can live together . nicely and can grow and can develop more, their living standards should . become better than what was before their marriage. . They should have a good sexual life also…* **Rekha (F), India**

'Attachment' between a couple was emphasised; other informants told me that material success is 'hollow' without happiness and love. Such regard for conjugal intimacy has been observed in other recent studies conducted with young middle class Indians (cf. Donner 2008, Fuller and Narasimhan 2008). At first glance then it would certainly appear that marriages in India are undergoing a 'transformation of intimacy' (Parry, 2001). In speaking with young informants, 'love stories' and romantic tales around marriage abound. Young men and in particular young women told me about using their 'sixth sense' in choosing a future spouse, of romantic dating and of the importance of 'attachment' between a couple. Then are young Indians moving towards a 'companionate' definition of marriage? First I consider to what degree is the linking of love with marriage a recent phenomenon.

### 6.1.2 Is love in marriage new?

Osella and Osella have noted after years of research in Kerala, southern India, that only within the last few years the hope that one will fall in love with one's spouse has emerged (2006). This is supported by the literature which until recently has tended to stress the familial motivations of spouses. For example, Chandrasekhar writing in 1954 wrote that a young man does not take a wife for "sexual pleasure or companionship" but rather he marries "to help the family and…to perpetuate the family line" (Chandrasekhar 1954:339). But while it might be true in 1954 that most men married to perpetuate the family line, it is not the case that loving and intimate marriages were unheard of. 'Love marriages' have long been reported in ethnographic studies, even if they

received scant attention due to their 'unusualness' (Mody 2008). Literature and poetry from the last 100 years have also portrayed love between spouses as a favourable attribute (Donner 2002:86). Finally amongst my older informants it was clear that many experienced and valued love and intimacy with their spouses. Then what has changed? Below I describe one man's story of love and marriage in an attempt to unpick what these changes might be.

*Suryan*

Suryan and I met on a train from Ahemedabad[80] to Mumbai. As often happens on long train journeys in India, he generously shared his food and life story with me as we made our way through the Gujarati countryside. He was particularly fascinated with my thesis topic and took it upon himself to educate me on the virtues of Indian marriage. For Suryan, marriage in the 'West' was a sorry affair and he was keen to convince me that in India couples had the *"good deal"*. To illustrate his misgivings about western marriage, he told me about his own *"perfect marriage"*. Suryan first met his wife on their wedding day. She had been chosen for him by his parents, which he assured me was the best way. Now they had spent eighteen years together as husband and wife and he loved her *"every bit as much as during those first few years"*. Their marriage was a *"honeymoon"* – *"I am a very lucky man!"* he told me.

For Suryan only parents have the experience and knowledge necessary to find a good spouse. He feels that the success of his marriage is due to his parents' skills and ability at finding him a good wife. But now *"times have changed"* and it was unlikely that he would arrange a marriage for his son in the way that his marriage was arranged. In particular he told me young people were expecting more participation in choosing their spouse, were trusting their parents' judgement less, and were becoming *"choosier"*. Some, he told me, met *"hundreds"* of potential suitors. He spoke disparagingly of this 'choosiness' which he felt impeded the growth of love between a couple. He explained that if someone had a fixed idea of the kind of partner they wanted, then there is a possibility that they would never find that kind of person and thus they would spend their lives dissatisfied with their spouse. According to Suryan, it is better to trust parents and then learn to adjust to your new spouse.

Suryan's contention was that love will grow with the right attitude; only certain ingredients were needed, such as the right caste and class. In looking for a wife for his son he would look for *"family, culture, and character"*. The most important of these was *"family background"*; he was looking for a *"good family"*, one with a good reputation in the community, parents with a good education and from the same caste. After marriage the two families will become one so making sure the family had similar values was of utmost importance. As so many Indians were keen to

[80] A city in Gujarat

tell me 'it's not just the couple getting married'. Nevertheless, in deference to these *"modern days"*, Suryan was willing to let his son meet a fixed number of women, and from that pool his son would have to choose his future wife.

### 6.1.3 Love and choice

Suryan's story illustrates that love and affection within a marriage are not entirely 'new' in India. Like other older couples I met, Suryan described having love and affection for his wife. But this love 'grew' *after* he met his wife on their wedding day, a fact he explains by his ability to 'adjust'. He appeared to have little or no choice in choosing his spouse and, unlike young people nowadays, he had few expectations of his future wife. The decision was made for him, and he made the best out of the situation he was dealt. Thus we can see love was not a factor in the choosing of his wife – rather more 'familial' based criteria were used, such as caste, educational background and so on. What is new then is the emphasis on the young couple's participation in the choosing of their spouse, and the expectation or *prerequisite* of love when choosing a spouse for marriage.

'Choice' in the selection of a partner was emphasised time and again by young people, who contrasted their ability to choose with young couples in the past or in more rural areas.

> *But there are changes in these type of arranged marriage or anything, the girl and the guy, they have . they are given responsible of choosing the right person. Like in past, it was the family used to select the girl, 'you get married to her' . now they have given more freedom of selection of the girl and the guy.* **Rahul (M), India**

Even those who apparently had few or no options were keen to emphasise their agency in choosing their future spouse. For example, Milly, a housemate of mine in the Paying Guest House, was having her marriage arranged while I was in Baroda. Despite only being introduced to one potential suitor because her parents *"like him only*" she told me *"I will make the decision, I am very firm on this!"* Shortly afterwards Milly told me that she was falling in love with this man and that she had "decided" to go for marriage with him.

As discussed in Chapter Four, 'modernity' in Baroda was often associated with young people's autonomy. It seems then that having 'love' or affection for a partner emphasised that the partner was 'chosen' and therefore it was a modern relationship. This choice set my informants' relationships apart from the older generation and what they perceived as other more 'backward' rural communities. Autonomy and love have become interlinked in my young informants' narratives. This concurs with studies conducted in Nepal and East India; in both settings, researchers found that 'modern' relationships are signified by choice and individual fulfilment (Donner 2008; Liechty 2003). Nonetheless such an emphasis on love and choice does not lead to

an abandonment of other more 'traditional' criteria of a good match. In particular, young people still prefer to marry someone of a similar caste or class background, and family participation in marriage is considered essential.

## *6.2 Love within the boundaries of social acceptance*

> *[In a love marriage] sexual attraction is much more than any other things between two persons – so attraction comes first nothing else. So after marriage, attraction will be gone after few years and then the quarrelling will start and there is a bad chance for your life to start, or you call divorce. When in arranged marriage, for both of them for boys and girls, the parents are there – they can guide you. This boy is good, this family background is good, they are educated – so apart from attraction there is a lot of things counted, it is a really very good thing.* **Hiren (M), India**

In the above extract Hiren describes why he thinks arranged marriage is better than love marriage. He suggests that a love marriage is based on attraction, but without consideration of other things such as the family background and education. Since this attraction will only last a few years, the couple will lose interest in one another and eventually get divorced. Such a dismal view of a match based purely on love was common. So much so, that even love marriage couples couched their marriages in more traditional terms, assuring me that even as their marriage was a 'love marriage', they too had taken into account family and cultural values. For my informants, a lasting love should or could only happen within marriage; within caste/class boundaries; and in conjunction with family considerations. Each of these conditions for love is outlined below.

### 6.2.1 Love only within marriage

In India marriage remains the only respectable arena for relationships. Marriage is considered a rite of passage for young people to gain maturity, and a precondition for parenthood (Kohler-Riesmann 2000). Osella and Osella write of their observations in Kerala, South India that "young men and women have almost no latitude to 'opt out' of marriage, parenthood and the heterosexual nuclear household" (2006:116). This concurs with my findings. For example, I asked all my informants if they wanted to get married or their thoughts on not getting married – most could not even contemplate marriage as an 'option'; it is obligatory. Here Durish reacts to my question of whether and why he wants to get married:

> *I believe this is a way, how you can continue your generation. That's why we are on earth, that's why we are born, to continue the race. It's been continued for long years. I believe that my brother got married and even I have to get married and get settled and take responsibility, that's the main thing, to take responsibility and to fulfill it.* **Durish (M), India**

We can see two things here: First of all Durish links marriage with procreation, and second with his 'responsibility' which his older brother has already taken. Marriage is a rite of passage.

Not only is marriage considered compulsory, but the marital relationship indissoluble. Many of my informants pointed out to me that "Hindus don't divorce" – that it is not recognised in the Hindu religion. Divorce was considered a problem of western countries, not India. A typical opinion of this kind came from Muktha:

> *KT: And why do you think a marriage would end, your marriage in the future, why would you finish a marriage?*
>
> *M: Finish a marriage?! Finish?! ..*
>
> *KT: That's not possible?*
>
> *M: I don't understand you.*
>
> *KT: Divorce?*
>
> *M: Oh no! Divorce you know is not in our culture. Means, here what happens, they are, they think that, means, they are thinking about society also. And there [UK] they are thinking about just their both, means 'I don't like she – divorce!'* **Muktha (F), India**

Muktha recognises the social consequences of divorce – that is both the implications for the families of a failed marriage and the reputation of the couple. Divorce was considered the hallmark of a 'bad family', one that didn't give proper support to their children. Divorcees find it difficult to find a future marriage partner since they are labelled as 'unsettled' in their mind and likely to divorce again. It is generally thought that a divorced person will only be able to marry another divorced person. Reading matrimonial classifieds one often comes across a description of a woman who has had an 'innocent divorce'. This refers to her lack of culpability in the dissolution on her marriage. It could refer to a woman who has been beaten by her husband – which I was told some women used as an 'excuse' to justify their divorce.[81]

Some of my informants, however, felt that divorce was generally becoming more acceptable, as Swati explains:

> *KT: If you are unhappy then would you stay or would you divorce?*
>
> *S: No I would take divorce because I don't like to keep on having same stress on yourself. You can live individual and work on your own. Earlier the society was narrow minded, there were cases of divorcee female living alone, were not accepted so at that time the cases of adjustment, sacrifice was more. But now nobody is caring about it so it is better instead of having daily fights because it spoils your mind very badly so it's better if you separate.* **Swati (F), India**

[81] Being beaten was considered a valid reason for a divorce by my informants, but statements such as those which refer to women using violence as an 'excuse' to end a marriage suggest that there is some suspicion that the extent of violence in marriage is exaggerated. This is of course convenient for men who do beat their wives.

Nonetheless, divorcing after having children was considered unacceptable by all of my main informants:

> *After one children ending marriage is difficult, because society cannot accept and other thing is what she can do with children? I can think in going to my father mother no problem. No problem meaning problem is problem, but she has to go to her father and mother is very very big problem*. **Tarun (M), India**

Tarun here suggests that a single mother is not accepted by society and is unlikely to be welcomed back into her parents' home. In contrast the husband has 'no problem' in returning home since he will not have the burden of children. I did come to know of one woman who was divorced and living alone with her child in Baroda. She, however, had been educated in England and confessed that her situation was highly unusual. [82]

But whether or not informants feel divorce is becoming more 'acceptable', my informants felt that love in itself should mean being together forever with your 'perfect match':

> *I believe there is . one girl for every guy and that girl is . almost same to the guy and that guy is almost same to the girl. . So that would be a perfect match. .. I am just, I am not looking currently, but when I am looking, I will be looking for such kind of girl. … We believe, that God has created one girl for me out there, there is one girl out there for me.* **Durish (M), India**

Evidence of more than one relationship brought into question the love of the earlier or present relationship. It seemed that 'true love' could only happen once. For example, in the marriage course I attended the teacher started a debate about 'true love':

> *There is a shift in media showing people falling in love more than once – then is there true love? Statistics show that people are marrying more than once so can you fall in love more than once?* **Marriage course teacher (F)**

The class seemed unsure how to answer this and there was silence for some time. Then some students wondered if it was infatuation rather than love: *"You can think you are in love with someone without actually being so"* one student suggested. The teacher seemed to agree with this suggestion and the conclusion was that 'true love' can indeed only happen once – earlier relationships must be only infatuation.

Interestingly, the same discussion arose within the focus group discussions. The fictional character from the vignette I devised, Vikram, had been in two relationships before meeting the female protagonist Shilpa. Vikram told Shilpa that he was in love with her but the participants were distrustful of him based on his previous relationships.

[82] According to the most recent data available, India has one of the lowest rates of divorce in the world – around 1% of marriages ended in divorce in 2001 (Census of India 2001).

*Previously he had relations with two girls, was it love? Was it infatuation or what?*

**Male Focus Group Participant, India**

*A: Love word means, it should last!*

*B: Yeah! That is my point, that is my point! He should have married her!*

**Male Focus Group Participants, India**

The overwhelming opinion was that a person should only have one relationship and you should marry that person. Mody (2008) found similar results amongst her love marriage participants in New Delhi who were determined to marry their first love(Mody 2008). She argued that couples use marriage to legitimise their relationship.

As discussed in Chapter Two, researchers in India have suggested that the observed emphasis on love amongst young Indians suggests that India is moving towards a model of 'modern intimacy' such as that proposed by Anthony Giddens. Amongst other things, Giddens has suggested that 'modern' intimacy is signified by 'confluent' temporal love:

> "It refers to a situation where a social relation is entered into for its own sake, for what can be derived by each person from a sustained association with another; and which is continued only in so far as it is thought by both parties to deliver enough satisfaction for each individual to stay within it." (Giddens 1992:58)

That is, as intimacy between a couple increases in importance, the permanency of the couple decreases since the couple only stays in a relationship in as much as it offers satisfaction and fulfilment. As we can see from the above, there is little evidence that relationships in India are moving towards a more 'confluent' model; the ideal remains a stable marital relationship.

### 6.2.2 The importance of caste and class

Those who fall in love with someone of the wrong caste or class were spoken of disapprovingly, even by the most romantic of individuals. For example, Seeta, who was in a 'love' relationship with a man from a different caste but one who was of a similar class background, told me a story about an affluent young girl who ran away with a rickshaw driver. The girl eloped to Mumbai but her parents eventually found her, kidnapped her back, and married her off to someone of their choosing. Far from sympathising with this girl, Seeta berated her for being so foolish and selfish. She felt the girl's parents were justified in kidnapping her back and marrying her off to someone more suitable. Seeta did not apparently make the connection between her own situation and that of this girl's. For Seeta, the large status gap and the fact that the parents were against the

marriage would ultimately result in a 'failed marriage'. In contrast her boyfriend came from a wealthy, well-educated family.[83]

Since love marriage is proscribed, love marriage couples, especially ones that break religious boundaries (such as Hindu-Muslim couples) are ostracized by society. There are consequences for the couples' families too; having a love marriage in a family can inhibit the ability of the parents to arrange a marriage for other sons and daughters, and damage the parents' reputation. In Seeta's frequent stories about love marriages, she told me about the consequences for the family left behind. In this following story, Seeta tells me about a friend of hers whose two sisters eloped at the same time:

> *Seeta: They ran away in the same week to marry some boys. Can you imagine?! It was very difficult for her* [friend]*! Everyone's eyes were on her.*
>
> *KT: Did you speak to her?*
>
> *S: No! I couldn't talk to her, what happens if she then runs away and people will be coming to me, asking me where she has gone! They will think I have done something, maybe they think I will runaway too!*
>
> *KT: What happened to her?*
>
> *S: Her parents had to change city, everybody knew about it and then they got her married within two months!! Or maybe she will run away too. Now she has married someone who is not on her level, maybe her parents paid a lot of money too.*

According to Seeta, the two sisters that had run away had damaged the family's reputation and affected her friend's ultimate marriage, forcing her to marry someone 'not on her level.'[84] Even Seeta was at risk of a sort of contamination by association with her friend. Young people in India are "persons of self and persons of groups" (Mody 2008:191).Their behaviour has implications not just for themselves, but for their kin (and even friends). As Mody further explains:

> "This allows us to see how actions aren't just unmediated acts of 'individuality', but are simultaneously actions of persons-as-accountable to groups to which they are assumed to belong." (Mody 2008:191)

Thus when young people make decisions around marriage, they must take into account both the consequences for themselves, and for their family and friends. With such implications some parents warned their children that a love marriage would result in their expulsion from the family or at best the withdrawal of parental support from the couple. Such pressures serve to ensure the perseverance of caste and class endogamy.

[83] She also insisted that she would not marry without her parents' permission. Her story is discussed in more detail in Chapter Eight.

[84] By 'not on her level' Seeta was referring to a spouse who was less good looking, with less educational attainment or from a family with poorer economic resources.

Informants then depict arranged marriage as the more reliable option for marriage since parents choose the right sort of spouse with a *"cool head"*.[85] In love marriage a decision of who to marry is stereotyped as being made by unreliable emotions and attraction, as Hiren explains above, and could lead to family breakdown once the initial attraction wears off. Thus the younger generation, as well as the older generation, were concerned that a future spouse *"ticks all the right boxes"*. Even as young people emphasised the love or romantic narrative of relationships, all were clear about the kind of person they wanted to marry in terms of caste, class, education, and occupation. Material and affective motives were indistinguishably intertwined for my informants. Many informants told me in one breath about the importance of love and in the next about the importance of a spouse's good educational background.[86] For example, I was often told by women that they preferred to marry a man with a degree such as engineering which will guarantee him a good future salary. A "BCom boy" (a graduate of Commerce) was to be avoided.

As Fernandes's analysis (2000) of the effects of liberalisation on the middle classes in India showed, the restructuring of the labour market and the move to 'white collar' jobs in multinational corporations on the one hand increased purchasing power and upward mobility, but on the other decreased job security. Class status needs to be carefully nurtured and renewed as wealth needs to be maintained and re-accumulated in every generation (see Walsh 2004 in Donner 2008:59). Marriage then has become a means through which families attempt to ensure their children's financial future, in particular a daughter's future. Muktha's mother was more candid than most on this point. She told me explicitly that although they were middle class, the money was tight. They had therefore invested all their money into Muktha's and her brother's education. She ensured that Muktha got a masters degree as this would enable a marriage to a boy with an even better education, who would surely have good earning potential. She told me they expected someone with at least an engineering degree from a prestigious Indian Institute of Technology but were hoping for a boy[87] in England, where her sister lived.

But my informants normally justified the importance of marrying within caste or religion and to a certain extent class by referring to patrilocal customs. After marriage the bride is understood to have joined her husband's family. She takes his surname and is expected to move in with his family, or at least to spend significantly more time with them. As Priya who had an arranged marriage told me, "*It's not just we both are getting married, I am going to have relation with them* [husband's family] *also."* A woman's future married life is heavily influenced by her husband's family and much emphasis is placed on networks and connections between families since these will theoretically ensure that the daughter-in-law will be treated well in her future family home. A

[85] I.e. not 'hot' with emotions. See also (Donner 2002).
[86] See Appendix C for a table of personal traits which informants ranked in order of importance when choosing a spouse.
[87] 'Boy' and 'girl' are commonly used to refer to unmarried men and women regardless of their age.

marriage that breaks cultural or status boundaries is perceived to inhibit the daughter-in-law from 'adjusting' to her new family and could create problems for any future children. If two families come from the same caste and class, it is argued, this will ensure that the families have similar values so that the daughter's adjustment into her new family will not be too difficult. This 'adjustment' was often used as a reason to justify the importance of caste or 'community'[88] endogamy. An arranged marriage then should ensure that the families are reasonably alike and thus the son and daughter can rest easy that their parents have facilitated a good marriage for them.[89]

### 6.2.3 The importance of family and filial duty

Family values are considered the cornerstone of respectable middle class Indian life and an emphasis on the family is an emblem of Indian identity (Dell 2005). Marriages based solely on love were portrayed as a more individualistic or selfish option, breaking the 'chain relationship' between son/daughter and family. Nirali elaborates on this point:

> *N: But I think the love marriage, it's a relationship between only two people, they doesn't look at what kind of people in their families, culture, background, they don't want to look and when, once they are getting married, maybe the girl cannot adjust in other family, because she doesn't know all the people, na? […] So the both of families can be having not very good relationship cause they don't know each other, they don't have any relations or, any em, any chain relationship, you know chain relationship?*
>
> *[KT shakes head]*
>
> *N: I mean eh, the one, eh, your friend's friend, your friend's cousin, you know what, in India these kind of relationship, then I don't think there can be a very good family.* **Nirali (F), India**

The 'chain relationship' refers to the networks and connections that are established between the families of the young couple. Marrying without the family's consent disrupts these chain relationships and suggests that more importance has been given to the individual than the family – as Nirali remarks a love marriage is *"between only two people".* Moving towards more 'individualistic' values that emphasise the couple over the family was considered a threat to the stability of the Indian family. In describing the dangers of too much individualism informants pointed to the 'collapse' of families in the 'West' where grandparents are left in nursing homes and children grow up without parents. In contrast, informants portrayed Indian middle class society as modern, but family-oriented too.

[88] 'Community' is an ambiguous term used by informants which seems to primarily refer to the state from which the person is from (e.g. the Gujarati community or the Punjabi community) but can also be used to refer to caste groups.
[89] But as Donner (2002) noted in her study in Calcutta, in arranged marriage too there are problems of 'adjustment', but in these marriages it is put down to individual personalities rather than proscribed caste/community differences.

Thus choice in future spouse is negotiated within the confines of family desires and many informants feel that parents should get the last say in the choice of their spouse. Such evidence of filial duty is counterbalanced by informants' claims that their parents have similar values to them. So, for example, Toni told me that half the time he didn't even meet the women that came to his house enquiring for an arranged marriage, so sure was he that his parents were of the same mind, he had them take the first interview in his place. Thus Toni demonstrates that his autonomy is not compromised by his parents' participation.

While informants emphasised love in their relationships, this love remains within hegemonic discourses of marriage, caste/class endogamy, and family duty. This leads to some ambiguous understandings of love, which are clarified through an examination of the relationship between love and desire.

## *6.3 Love and desire: Emotional love versus physical love*

> *Nowadays, the world has changed so fast you don't have any clear definition of a love (…) You can say there is a couple that they are together years and yet they didn't have any physical relation … so some people will say, ""Wow what a love, they are doing a very true love"" and others will say, "What type of love they have! They haven't even touched to each other! What type of love is this?!'*
>
> **Anupa (F), Focus Group Participant**

In India informants delineated two kinds of love: physical love and 'true' love. This binary distinction emphasises the sexual nature of one and the asexual nature of the other. But I argue in this section that 'true love' has come to represent a more considered and socially acceptable form of love, one that can exist side by side with social norms of arranged marriage.

For my informants, 'true love' was similar to love for family members, an idealised 'pure' love, untainted by physical attraction.[90] Physical intimacy may be part of marriage, but *physical love* is a purely sexual relationship, associated more with so-called 'time pass' relationships. A 'time pass' relationship is one in which the man and woman are not serious about the long term prospects of the relationship and are just having fun or 'passing time' until they meet another boy/girl. Such behaviour showed that you were not serious about your relationship aspirations and women in particular found a man suggesting a 'time pass' relationship disrespectful.

[90] Similarly Ask (1993) in Pakistan found ideals of an untainted pure love. Passionate love (ishq) is frowned upon between married couples and looked on like a disease.

*KT: And how can you tell if someone wants a 'time pass' relationship, like, how would you know, how would I know if I was dating a guy, how would I know this is a 'time pass' relationship or this is a 'serious' relationship?*

*Durish: You'll get to know from the importance that guy gives you. If that guy just wants, only wants to have physical relationship with you that means he is doing time pass with you or he is just having lust for you, for me time pass and lust is the same. […] Whenever you meet him if he always just wants to kiss you and do all physical stuff that means he is doing time pass with you.* **Durish (M), India**

Sexual restraint in a relationship signifies serious intentions for the relationship (such as marriage) or 'true love' (see also Abraham 2002). For example, my housemate Milly had been 'friends' with Vineet since high school. Although she told me she loves Vineet, when he proposed marriage to her she said no, due to his different caste status. He is now married to a girl from the same caste but he and Milly have maintained their romantic albeit non-sexual relationship. Milly demonstrated Vineet's 'true love' for her by giving me examples of his sexual restraint. She told me one story from before Vineet was married: She and Vineet went on a trip together with a group of friends. Due to some mix up, they ended up sharing a hotel room but Milly proudly told me that although they shared a bed, they didn't touch one another the whole night. According to Milly, Vineet desires nothing more than to hold her hand. Such constructions serve to maintain the status quo of arranged and suitable marriages and allow women to have relationships without jeopardizing her 'purity'.[91]

If sexual restraint suggests serious intentions and 'pure love', lust suggests lack of control and relationship decisions made on the basis of 'merely' physical criteria. This physical love is associated with 'love marriage' since those marriages are ones which are made without recourse to caste and family considerations. As I shall explain in Chapter Eight, for my informants in Baroda a love marriage is negatively characterised as a marriage that breaks caste boundaries and that goes against the wishes of parents. Arranged marriage is not only the continued norm in India, but also the respectable and preferred choice for many middle class Indians. What I am trying to say is: physical love denotes a lower kind of relationship which is ruled by desire while pure love takes into account both community and personal considerations. Mody had similar findings in her study of love marriage couples in New Delhi. She argues that since 'love' and in particular 'love marriage' has become associated with the 'corrupt West', love marriage couples attempt to distance themselves from western love relationships, claiming their love is superior by its spiritual and pure (not physical) nature (Mody 2008:107). That is, they draw on discourses of 'pure love' in legitimising their relationship which my informants would characterise as 'only' physical in nature.

[91] Though for some women even having a non-sexual pre-marital relationship makes them 'impure'.

### 6.3.1 Love at first sight

This can be further clarified by an analysis of informants' attitudes towards 'love at first sight'. My early experiences of fieldwork had led me to consider young Gujaratis as hyper-romantic. Observing their courtship rituals reminded me of movies portraying 1950s America. Their frequent conversations on 'true love' and romance seemed far more idealistic than my own conversations with peers on relationships. Thus I was expecting a certain partiality towards love at first sight, but in fact I found that young people were very firm in their feeling that love at first sight does not and should not exist. Wanting to explore this, I introduced 'love at first sight' into the vignette used in group discussions (see Appendix A). In the story, Vikram tells his sister's friend that he has fallen in love with her, although they have just met for the first time. I asked the focus group participants what they thought Shilpa should do. To my surprise they reacted strongly against Vikram's declaration of love and felt that Shilpa should be very wary of a man who makes such claims. They said that love at first sight was "impossible", "false", and generally undesirable. One participant explained:

> *Vikram is saying it is love at first sight, so he can love her in a second, so he can forget her in a half second.* **Male Focus Group Participant, India**

Part of the ambivalence around love at first sight then appears to stem from the idea that such 'quick' love cannot last.

Only two cases of acceptable love at first sight emerged during my fieldwork in India. The first came from a male focus group participant who, after hearing other group members' objections to Vikram's claims of love, said he had experienced love at first sight with his girlfriend:

> *I believe in love at first sight. I have a girlfriend and that since 15 years. And it was love at first sight. We are going to get married, I proposed to her in 2002. For 15 years, I am still going with her, I never touched her, I never kissed her.* **Male Focus Group Participant, India**

It is important to note that in the same statement about his experience of love at first sight, he feels compelled to mention that he has never kissed or touched his girlfriend. He has to prove that his love for his girlfriend is more than 'mere' physical love, which is looked upon as a lesser kind of love. Part of the problem with love at first sight is that it is assumed to be based purely on physical appearance, and is thus equated with 'physical love'.

The second exception in this group came from Muktha who dreamed about experiencing love at first sight… but within the arranged marriage context. As with my other informants, Muktha insisted that she must love her husband and he her, though she anticipates having a marriage arranged by her parents. When I ask her how this might be possible when she won't even know her husband, she says:

*So it is possible that he loves me first…uh…means I take the time to love him but he loves me and he… first sight love you know in arranged marriage it can happened, that first sight love.* **Muktha (F), India**

When all other factors are accounted for, love at first sight is acceptable. Part of the problem with love at first sight then is its power to disrupt patterns of arranged marriage and the ideal construction (literally) of a suitable match.

But surprisingly, this feeling that desire should not be overpowering, did not translate into a more considered or planned approach to sex. In fact, I found that since informants were concerned that their love should not be categorised as 'physical love', they were careful to demonstrate that the impetus for sex was not desire per se, but rather to *show* love. According to my informants, 'planning' sex shows a concern for sexual fulfilment rather than being moved to show love for your spouse. Here Durish explains what he would do if his wife wanted to 'plan' sex:

*I would tell her* [wife] *that "Lets not take an initiative to do it, let's make it happen naturally." .. Then only it's, otherwise it's like just physical relationship and if it happens naturally then I feel like I show love or she shows love.* **Durish (M), India**

While sex should not be planned, nor was it described in the uncontrollable 'spur of the moment' way that UK informants described sex (see Chapter Seven). Rather the important element is that sex is motivated by love. Such a construction also helps situate and encourage a 'controlled sexuality' which is appropriately within marriage.

Love at first sight, with its relation to sexual desire and therefore physical love, suggests a relationship which is based on spontaneous and uncontrollable attraction. As Donner (2002) noted in Calcutta, the 'problem' with love marriages is that they are predicated on a love which has not been carefully planned and thought out with due course to factors beyond mere physical appearance. Arranged marriage is central to the continued propagation of caste distinctions and family authority. Love at first sight by its 'quick' nature suggests it is based on physical chemistry alone, without proper reference to more 'social' criteria of a good marriage. 'Quick love' leads to a 'quick' marriage – i.e. one that will end in divorce. A point informants frequently made by referring to high divorce rates in 'western' countries (see also Parry 2001).

### 6.3.2 Physical love within marriage

Still, there seems to be some ambiguity in young people's understandings of the role of physical intimacy in love. That is, informants in India who broadly favoured emotional love over physical love still valued sexual closeness in marriage and some understood physical intimacy as a means to bring a couple closer to one another. Muktha, for example, says "*I am also believing that*

*physical relations are there then love is becoming deeper and deeper – it's good for it*." But this physical intimacy remains firmly within the discourse of marriage.

Since many informants intended to or had experience of falling in love before marriage, mostly during engagement, this created some confusion. Here Krishna tells me about his experience of falling in love with a class mate, Veena.

> *Krishna: I respect Veena, I have never felt anything physical for her … I have true love for her. True love is less likely to be physical, it's the same love that you have for your parents, your brother, your sister and your friends.*
>
> *KT: What about feelings for a wife?*
>
> *K: After marriage you might feel that way* [physical attraction] *but for me before marriage, it's hard to think that way.* **Krishna (M), India**

It appears that Krishna tries to separate the kind of love which is possible (permissible?) before marriage from that possible after marriage; marriage itself sanctions physical feelings.

If we look back at Anupa's comments on 'what is love', we see how the love – sex – marriage conundrum creates questions on the very nature of 'true' love. Should it be physical? Should it be emotional? The resulting overall impression is a rather pragmatic 'it should be emotional before marriage and then physical after.' As another focus group participant explains:

> *KT: Okay, and does that mean that true love is not physical or … is it different from this physical love?*
>
> *B: Yeah, it is different. I am not telling that the true love they did not have any physical relationship, yes they have, but [... ] First of all they prefer marriage. I am talking about Indian culture, as you know we are Indian, and according to Indian culture, if you take a true love, that means you respect the person so if you respect the person then you don't need this other stuff so maybe they get married or if accidentally they have been in a physical relation, they will think for a marriage.* **Female Focus Group Participant, India**

Here the focus group participant calls on notions of 'Indianess' to explain what she herself is unable to explain. It's seems then that 'modern' intimacy with its linking of sexuality and intimacy is perceived to be antipathetic to Indian cultural ideals of marriage, the family, and female chastity.

Other informants suggested that sex deepens love or that it is 'precious' and should therefore be kept for a life partner. This perception also prompted informants to feel that someone who has sex before marriage will find it difficult to get over that person. As Jambli (F) explains:

> *It happens sometimes with some girls that they had some relationship, they had this relationship with other guys, once or twice but if she won't get married to the same person,*

*or she will get married to some other person, she will feel that, em, I have done with some person already, she feels that 'I have done something wrong' she won't like it, if she adjusts, she will try to adjust, she will feel, she will regret that 'I was in love with somebody else and I did this with somebody else and I have to adjust with this other person.'*

But as Jambli later laughingly tells me, a friend of hers who was in a sexual relationship and is now married to another man is *"adjusting very well".* She then seems to change her mind about why it's important for a woman to be a virgin before marriage and tells me she thinks a woman's virginity is important so that her husband will not feel "*ashamed or bad"* for her character. Thus even as love and sex are linked together reinforcing the intimacy between a couple, sex is framed as only appropriate with marriage since a woman's lack of 'purity' is related to shame, and her chastity related to the continued respectability of the middle classes.

## *6.4 The impact of gender on ideologies of love*

It should be noted finally that there are some differences between men's and women's attitudes to love and marriage. Specifically, it seemed that women were more attached to a romantic discourse of love than men. Sometimes this emerged in individual interviews, and at other times it arose during a couple's interview together, such as in the following extract taken from my first interview with an arranged marriage couple, Hiren and Swati. In this extract we can see how Hiren emphasises the pragmatic basis of their marriage, while Swati appears to prefer a more romantic construction of their introduction meetings:

*KT: And what made you think 'okay, I can marry this person' , after three meetings?*

[Both laugh]

*Hiren: See, it's eh, in our family and in our religion, there is a horoscope matching.* [92] *So before we met, our horoscope matched,* [laughs] *and it's match and it's fine, okay, then we meet. So … what I believe, in married life, nobody is perfect, and you have to sacrifice . for your life partner. With anybody, so… nothing is think that much.*

*KT: Okay*

*H: It will come, we will face it, like that.*

*KT: Okay*

*H:* [3 seconds] *It's an inner feeling, you get to know it, it comes like 'okay', your sixth sense / says that*

*S: /Yes, it was/*

*H: /Okay, he is a good person*

*KT: Mhmm*

[92] Some Hindu Indians believe that the compatibility of a future husband and wife can be assessed through an analysis of horoscopes. This is normally undertaken by a priest but can also be done by a computer programme.

*H: I can stay with him or her, or I can live with /her.*

*S: /We just knew!* **Hiren (M) and Swati (F), India**

From there Swati continued to speak at length about the importance of a *"sixth sense"*. Unlike Hiren, she downplayed the practical aspects of their choosing one another, such as their horoscope matching. Meanwhile Hiren only mentions the *"sixth sense"* once and then qualifies it with the limp statement 'I can live with her'.

It's not that men didn't have romantic aspirations but that they tended to stress more pragmatic reasons for choosing a future spouse. In particular men described feeling a responsibility to choose a wife that will match well with his family. As mentioned before, after marriage women are expected to move into their husband's family home or at the minimum to spend a lot of time with their husband's family. A woman changes her surname and is understood to be 'given' to her husband's family. Indeed many women spoke of their husband's family as their own, making little distinction between in-laws and their own parents. When choosing a spouse male informants were concerned to choose someone who would fit in with their family. Aditya, for example, spoke at length of his worries about Geet getting on with his family. He told me he worried much less about his relationship with Geet because she would be spending more time with his family – especially his mother and sister-in-law, who she would be at home with most of the day – than she would with him. Perhaps then men have less to gain from a romantic narrative than women. To women, romantic love and 'companionate marriage' might suggest a more intimate and equal relationship with a husband and a relationship which will facilitate more autonomy in their in-laws' house. Whether and how a more companionate view of marriage results in more equality between husband and wife is discussed in Chapter Nine.

## *Conclusion*

As suggested by the literature and further elaborated on in this chapter, there does seem to be a growing desire for marriages formed on the basis of love and affection. In Baroda this love has been linked to 'modern' ideals and a middle class urban lifestyle. But I have shown that values around caste/class endogamy and family participation in marriage remain of crucial importance for a respectable match. Furthermore, while 'love' is essential for young informants in interpreting their marriage as one of choice and modernity, a non-physical 'true' love is preferred since it does not disrupt the on-going importance of arranged marriage. In Chapter Eight I discuss how these ideals of love and choice in marriage shaped informants' courtship and marriage practices.

# Chapter Seven: Love just happens – ideals of love and relationships amongst British Gujaratis in London

In this chapter I describe the kinds of ideals my UK-based informants described to me of love, relationships, and marriage. As discussed in Chapter Four, informants in the UK were keen to position themselves as modern cosmopolitan Indians. They distanced themselves from more 'traditional' Gujaratis who live in 'Gujarati areas', disparaging them for living in a similar way to their parents or Indians in India and not *"adapting to the way things are in Britain"* (Yogesh (M)). As we shall see in this chapter, such concerns impact on ideologies around love and relationships since informants associated more traditional arranged marriage practices as the way of the 'older generation' and more romantic spontaneous relationships as the 'modern' British approach.

## *7.1 Love as a basis for marriage*

> *You know like a bit more like loving .. I don't know. I think that would be, I think you know that's something . that makes a good marriage.* **Naveen (M), UK**

As in India, informants' marriage and relationship ideals centred around feelings of love and intimacy for their partner. Understanding their relationships as 'love' relationships was of utmost importance, and informants spent considerable time demonstrating the quality of their relationships by giving me examples of intimacy and love. Spending leisure time together and *wanting* to spend the bulk of their free time with their partner were both important signifiers of a loving relationship. Renu, for example, highlighted the fact that she and James still dated, despite living together for over a year. This, she felt, reassured her that the relationship was still healthy and that they still cared for one another.

Unlike in India, UK informants contrasted their marriages and ideals of marriages with those of the 'older generation', such as their parents. In particular they told me that their parents were too independent of one another and showed little affection for one another:

> *Sohan: Anyway but they* [parents] *would just live together but live totally independent lives and hardly probably not spend much time together. So for me I guess that a successful marriage would be even when you get to that age and you spend that long together, in that case you would still, - you know, you still spend time together like you know.* **Sohan (M), UK**

In the UK I met fewer parents and so cannot make much comment on their relationships. But I find it unlikely that parents in India and parents in the UK have particularly different relationships.

If, as I suspect, they are similar it would seem that UK informants have slightly different relationship expectations than my India-based informants, despite both groups placing a lot of emphasis on intimacy and attachment. In the UK there appears to be more importance placed on spending exclusive time with the partner, whereas many India based informants spent their spare time with other couples and family members. This suggests that second generation Indians are more focused on the couple as the centre of intimate life, whereas in India the couple is one part of the family and friends circle of intimacy. There was also little emphasis on 'adjusting' and 'understanding' in the UK and more emphasis on physical affection and sex, which I discuss in more detail below.

The importance of love and affection in marriage amongst second generation Indians has only been reported in studies from the last ten years (Prinjha 1999; Raj 2003) suggesting that this is either a new phenomenon or that it has only recently received scholarly interest. Previous studies tended to underplay the role of love, although Brah noted that love after marriage was important for some of her respondents (Brah 1977). But for my informants, the *entire* point of marriage was described as a means to solidify the love of a couple. Even those who were going through an introduced marriage told me that they intended to only marry someone if or after they fell in love with them. This love was portrayed as value free, spontaneous, and sexual.

## *7.2 Love just happening*

> *To me it seemed like it* [our relationship] *happened really gradually. It was just kind of like . but it was never a point I kind of thought that I would move to this stage or now we would, you know it just kind of happened naturally in my, to me anyway. So .. you know to begin with we'd maybe see each other when we want or once a week. I think it kind of built up . and slowly. to a point where we were seeing each other more or less . every day. […] We kind of lived together for about two years . before we got married . I think. […] It just kind of . developed if you like and then it* [marriage] *just became a natural thing to do.* **Sohan (M), UK**

As Sohan's story illustrates, informants emphasised the 'natural' evolving nature of their relationships, and love 'just happening' without any premeditation or arrangement. Sohan stresses the logical and gradual nature of each step he and Lona (his wife) took, reinforcing the 'natural progression' of their relationship and the lack of forethought or planning. He depicts their relationship as if it had a life of its own, the relationship happening to them, rather than the couple creating the relationship. UK-based informants reveal through stories such as Sohan's, that they '*fall* in love'. In the 'West', emotions are properly understood as spontaneous, rather than being

created or instigated by an individual (Rebhun 1999). The romantic construction of 'true love' demands that couples are 'swept away' unthinkingly by passion (Diekman *et al.* 2000).Thus in order to demonstrate the 'authenticity' of their love, informants emphasised the 'natural' way that love evolved.

'Artificial' situations which provoked relationships, such as through arranged marriage meetings, speed dating or matchmaking events were considered to disrupt this romantic discourse. These methods of meeting a partner were considered second best to more *"random"* ways of meeting a future partner:

> *So I guess I like that kind of random I don't know, random meetings with people. Not in a kind of zodiac, astrology kind of way but just in a fun quirky, isn't it crazy when the universe throws two people together kind of way.* **Renu (F), UK**

Renu's comments imply that *"random"* ways of meeting one another are more romantic, invoking suggestions of fate 'throwing two people together'. Such constructions clearly preclude arranged marriage norms and show a preference for 'love marriage'.

## *7.3 Marrying for love only*

In addition to informants' emphasis on the 'evolving' nature of their relationships, they were also reluctant to verbalise 'traditional' criteria that a person might look for in a spouse, such as someone of the same caste or class. Some even used the fact that they were with the 'wrong' person as evidence that their relationship is genuinely based on love. For example, although Prity was dating an Indian man, she considered him an atypical choice because of his career aspirations and cultural values. She sees herself as more cosmopolitan and distances herself from other Indians and the choices they make when seeking a 'suitable' spouse. To her, their relationships are based on more superficial criteria.

Where couples admitted that they had found a partner of the 'right' community, education, occupation and so on, it was framed as a happy 'coincidence'. Such factors were portrayed as a 'bonus', and not a necessity. Here Pretak, who is married to another Gujarati (Darsha), explains:

> *I mean it would be nicer to have that* [a partner who is Gujarati] *because then you have that common cultural understanding and you know, there is lot less conversation needed, and it's just intuitive. But I just still, well, if you love each other, doesn't matter, you will work that out.* **Pretak (M), UK**

In short, for my UK-based informants love trumps all other considerations when looking for a match. Informants spoke disparagingly of 'other' Indians who just want to 'tick boxes' in choosing their spouse. There was some anxiety that those who participate in an introduced marriage are

simply going through the motions in order to get married to the 'right sort of person', without really seeing it as *"a union of two people in love"* (Rama (F)). This contrasts sharply with informants in India who, as discussed in the previous chapter, openly talked about the importance of finding a spouse that earns enough money or has a sufficiently good education. It seems in the UK this pragmatic discourse is largely silenced amongst young people, even as many admitted that they would ideally like to marry someone of the same ethnicity and educational or occupational background.

For most informants then, having a love marriage is itself evidence of 'love', while an introduced or arranged marriage was met with more scepticism. Furthermore, some wondered whether those who go through an arranged marriage really do get to choose their partner. Darsha (F) told me that arranged marriage couples "*have compromised their own choice, to let someone else make that choice."* She felt that they are more likely to settle for less, but might be more content and willing to compromise with their partner. In comparison she felt that a love marriage might be more volatile, but she explained that she would prefer to 'love and lose, than to never have loved at all'. So there is a strong desire for love before marriage, but not all love was judged equally. It seemed that the love of a love marriage was judged to be more authentic or real since the motivation of love was clearer; those who have an arranged marriage may have lesser 'societal' motives.

## *7.4 Marriage and the family*

With the emphasis on 'natural evolving' love between a couple, it might not be surprising that informants in the UK downplayed the importance of family when talking about marriage. Many informants in fact described marriage as a means to solidify the centrality of the couple and the importance of the partner/spouse in their life:

> *Like I think basically like you know if you're married to someone I should really like be a number one for you . do you know what I mean? [10 seconds] Yeah. So you know they should be like your main sort of concern.* **Naveen (M), UK**

The family, while important, was secondary to the 'new family' formed upon marriage. Rama for example, told me that she couldn't imagine living with her (future) husband's family since marriage is such an *"epic journey"* that they would need their own personal space to establish and nurture it.

Consequently, informants told me that they did not put much consideration into the family of the person that they were marrying. Of course, all the couples I interviewed had chosen their partner without any participation of the family, what they termed a 'love marriage', so this may have

impacted on the kind of data I gathered. But this was the case for single informants too and is probably influenced by the fact that UK informants do not intend to live with their in-laws (see also Bhachu 1985). Lona for example, in contrast to Priya in the last chapter, told me that she hardly thought about what her husband's family would be like:

> *When I met Sohan* [husband] *I probably didn't put as much focus on family background … because you are married to the individual, aren't we?* **Lona (F), UK**

There was some evidence though that informants' families felt they should be a larger part of the couples' married life. As Lona explains:

> *KT: Do you think married life is more or less how you thought it would be?*
>
> *L: …. Yeah it is. I mean . I think .. I think it's been a bit harder than I thought in terms of integrating with sort of . the wider family cause you know what Indian families are like. You're suddenly expected to just . blend in to this big mass of people that you've never met before. […] So I find that quite difficult and I probably still do … em . and that's been a bit a bit of a tension just cause I think his parents are constantly, I don't know "why isn't Lona . kind of making more of an effort?" or whatever . I think they'll just get used to it . eventually [Laughs]* **Lona (F), UK**

But while Lona feels some pressure, she laughs this off in the interview. In fact, she lives in a different city to her parents-in-law. Although both Lona and her husband Sohan tell me they value family and visit their families often, Sohan told me that *"Gujaratis from Gujarati areas"* are *"more family orientated"* and visit home more often. It was unclear whether he felt this was good or bad but previously he and Lona had taken pains to differentiate themselves from these more 'traditional' Indians. At any rate, it seemed that marriage in the UK is primarily understood as a union of two individuals, rather than a union of two families.

Macpherson argues that contemporary western society is marked by a concern for 'possessive individualism'.[93] Possessive individualism suggests that "[w]hat makes a man [or woman] human is freedom from dependence on the wills of others" and that individual freedom is compromised by relationships with others, including with parents. Only those relationships in which "the individual enters voluntarily with a view to his [or her] own interest" are truly 'free' (Macpherson 1964:263).[94] In addition, 'maturity' in western society is understood in terms of increased autonomy (Wyn and Woodman 2006). As de Munck has noted, in western media (and academic texts), love marriages have symbolised "democracy, freedom of choice and individuality" whereas arranged marriages symbolise "parental authority, calculation, and subjugation to the group" (1998:287). In looking at my informants' relationships in the UK, this helps explain why they took

[93] Reference to Macpherson's work on 'possessive individualism' was suggested by Fuller and Narasimhan (2008).
[94] Such ideals of individual autonomy are closely related to liberal democracy. John Stuart Mill, a founding father of liberal political theory, wrote: "The only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. … His independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign." (Mill 1862:683)

pains to show their relationship as one which has been entered into with minimal or no participation of parents and family, and without recourse to more traditional or material ideas of what makes a 'good match'. In this way informants demonstrate that their relationship has been made of their own choosing, while a relationship with arrangement is associated with loss of agency and autonomy. For UK-based informants, 'interference' from others compromises the authenticity of their choices and their love.

How do these ideologies and aspirations impact on sexuality and physical intimacy? In the following section I examine to what extent UK-based informants had similar misgivings as the India-based informants about the place of physical intimacy in love and courtship. As we shall see, the views are substantially different.

## *7.5 Love and desire: Emotional love versus physical love?*

When I started my fieldwork in the UK, it became apparent that UK informants had a very different attitude to sex and sexuality than the young men and women I had met in India. My first interview was with Lona and Sohan who had been introduced to me via the 'aunty' of Aditya and Geet in Baroda. I met with Sohan and Lona for our first interview in their apartment in central London. Married for two years, they are both young professionals working in the city. When I called to the door they had both just returned from work. Sohan poured us all a glass of wine and we started the interview. After discussing their experiences of growing up in England, I asked them the story of how they met and eventually married each other:

> *S: Like we sort of slowly started seeing more and more of each other and to the point where like even though we were living apart we were, I always had a bag with me 'cause I was either going to her place /or*
> *L: /[Laugh] yeah*
> *S: we were both going now back to my place or*
> *KT: Uhm.*
> *S: we. I think with her just got to a point where we were like well this is annoying so we'll just live together! [Laughs]* **Lona (F) and Sohan (M), UK**

At the time I was quite taken aback by their casual reference to staying over at one another's house. Narratives of my India-based informants still rang in my ears; I thought of Aditya and Geet coming to terms with Aditya's premarital sexual experiences and his rather guarded approach to 'confessing' his previous relationships to Geet. In comparison Lona and Sohan talked non-chalantly about 'snogging' in a bar and dating other people at the same time as one another. They depicted the sexual nature of their relationship and their moving in together before marriage as 'normal' or expected steps in a relationship. Their manner of talking about sex, laughing

conspiratorially with me, and throwing in the odd 'you know what I mean' indicated their assumption at how I would take this information; they assumed I had a similar relationship, referring to me and my fiancé (after noticing my engagement ring), they asked where we lived – assuming we lived together.

In part this 'ultra normal' approach was used by Lona and Sohan as a means to identify with me and to reinforce their image of themselves as 'just like any other Brit'. Had I been an Indian from India or an older person, these casual references to sex may not have emerged. To a large degree I think informants felt comfortable in sharing these stories because of the way I presented myself. Eager to be liked and thought of as like my informants, I drew on commonalities with them early on in interviews, such as discussing experiences of living in London or laughing along about gender stereotypes. But the broader context of the UK also encourages such stories of sex and relationships to emerge: As Plummer states:

> "[Whilst stories] can be heard amongst isolated individuals, they can gain no momentum if they stay in this 'privatised' mode, and personal narratives remain in the private sphere of dim inarticulateness, having no group to sustain them. For stories to flourish, there must be social worlds waiting to hear. Social worlds are not like communities of old: no locale is required, only a sense of belonging, sharing traditions, having common memories." (Plummer 1996:36)

My informants live in a context where stories of love and sex are fused, as such 'normalising' sexual love, and creating an environment in which their stories of passion can emerge. Such a context does not yet exist in India.

These casual references to sex made me think that for many of my UK informants sex in a relationship was a bit of a non-issue. Rather relationships which were *not* sexual merited discussion. The question of whether to have sex or not therefore didn't really arise since if you 'fancy' someone, it entails both emotional and sexual attraction. For example, Sohan reflected on communicating with partners about sex and said he generally only talked about sex with women who didn't want to have sex.

> *Did we ever talk about it before and [6 second pause] not .. really, there. . I mean there might have been . well there might have been times where it was, you know, maybe we didn't have sex for whatever reason. ... Was that you know, where we – I don't know maybe . the girl wasn't where she didn't want to that, you know, after not knowing somebody for long enough or whatever, I don't know but then that would be the only time I guess we'd talk about it. It wasn't like kind of – I kind of assumed they wanted to unless like they say.* **Sohan (M), UK**

Sex is the norm in a relationship and to not have sex was seen as unusual, something that needed discussing. (Though notions of spontaneity also inhibit discussing sex – see below.) UK Indians seem to have difficulty in verbalising motivations or reasons to have sex. For UK informants sex, like love, 'just happens'.

This created questions about how to elicit information around decisions to have sex. Many laughed at my early questions around virginity and sexual experience. Sex was portrayed as part of the 'natural' progression in relationships, which informants seemed unable or uneasy to pick apart. Rather discussions around why *not* to have sex and what to do if your partner didn't want to have sex were more fruitful. For example, without probing Darsha repeatedly explained her reasons for not having sex initially with Pretak; they weren't officially in a relationship and she suspected him to be a 'player'.[95] Darsha recognised that she was perhaps unusual in her need to delay having sex with Pretak and thus felt the need to defend her decisions to me and to Pretak.

For the majority of UK informants a sexless relationship[96] was incongruent with their lifestyles and views of a 'normal' relationship. Above all, a loving and 'healthy' relationship was regarded as one which had mutual desire, while sexless relationships were described as 'childish', 'just friends' or like 'living with a sister'.

> *If they are the sort of the person who didn't actually want to do anything, and I don't that would be a bit strange, but that's not really, yeah, going to back to your early question that's not really a healthy sexuality if you don't want to, you know, if you got no . inclination to do anything that's sort of physical, I think.* **Naveen (M), UK**

For Naveen, avoiding sex clashes with his idea of a 'healthy sexuality' and relationship. Either there is something wrong with the person who doesn't want to have sex or there is something wrong with the relationship. Only very short relationships, i.e. one or two dates, were non-sexual.[97]

More specifically sexual desire was described as an overpowering element in relationships which shouldn't be restrained. For example, when I asked Renu what her reactions would be if a man who she was dating requested to wait until marriage for sex she said:

> *I don't know. I can't answer that. It's really weird. ... You know when you meet a new person and you're really into them and especially if you've already, you know you've already come of, got over the whole losing your virginity thing then yeah you would*

[95] I discuss in Chapter Eleven the appropriateness of sex in different kinds of relationships but essentially informants felt that a serious and loving relationship should be a sexual one with more divergence on attitudes to 'casual' or non relationship sex.
[96] By the definitions of most of my informants this meant sexual intercourse but one informant had never had sexual intercourse with her partner but did not define this as a 'sexless' relationship.
[97] Other than first sexual relationships, discussed further below.

*definitely want to and yeah it would be really, really hard I think probably to be with somebody who wanted to wait.* **Renu (F), UK**

She later half-jokingly suggests getting married as quickly as possible as a way to resolve the issue of waiting until marriage for sex. I.e., in this imagined relationship with a man who doesn't want to have sex until marriage, Renu worries about how she could control her desire for him.

### 7.5.1 Carried away by desire

If we return to the examination of 'love at first sight', we see that in the UK, while it was considered a bit unrealistic, it was not objected to by my informants. Rama for example, claims she experienced love at first sight with her first boyfriend. Here she explains what this means to her:

*KT: What does that mean? What do you mean by love at first sight?*

*R: Well, I don't know. In that at 16 things are, things are more crazy anyway but we just had that instant everything like, physical chemistry or . emotional, felt like we understood each other. Just everything, just starting to align, you see what I mean? [Laughs].* **Rama (F), UK**

Notice how Rama brings together 'physical chemistry' and emotional love together in understanding her experience of love at first sight. Unlike the India based informants, she is in support of the idea of love at first sight because love can be out of control and can include physical desire. From an early stage, she and her boyfriend talked about having sex, but she wanted to wait until she was mature enough and perhaps keep this 'special' event for marriage. In the end, they were 'unable' to wait. She constructs sexual desire as part of her love for her boyfriend, which eventually became too much to restrain.

Opinions about 'waiting for sex' until marriage emerged primarily in the third interview. Informants were given a list of ten 'qualities' they would ideally like to have in a spouse and asked to prioritise them in order of importance (see Appendix C). In the UK informants almost universally placed virginity last. When I asked Renu to explain her reasons for placing virginity in tenth place she says:

*I think it would be a really, it would be a really weird thing to expect in this kind of day and age. Also for somebody who's lived my kind of lifestyle and been away to university and has you know quite an open relationship with their parents and all of that. I mean I can't then therefore go "I need to him to be a virgin"! That would just be hilarious. [KT and R Laugh]* **Renu (F), UK**

Renu associates virginity before marriage with a more traditional ideology, not for 'this kind of day and age' or for someone who has been to university. Other informants also expressed some

reserve about a partner who wanted to avoid sex before marriage, worrying that meant he or she was 'too traditional'.

> *L: I mean, so if he [husband] would have wanted to wait, even though I wasn't [a virgin], I don't know. [5 second pause] I am not sure we would have gone out for that long . to be honest.*
>
> *KT: [Laugh] […] Okay. So probably it wouldn't have lasted, the relationship?*
>
> *L: I don't think so. That sounds really bad but yeah, no, I don't think so.*
>
> *KT: But is it like, do you find that idea kind of jarring that somebody might want to wait until marriage or you see like it's..?*
>
> *L: No, I think it's fine if that's what he wants. I think, yeah, I don't have an issue with that. It's not a choice I would make. I am not sure that I would. It depends on what you are doing, […] if you are doing it just because you think you ought not to, then I don't know.*
>
> *KT: [7 second pause] Right. Why do you think someone would think "they ought not to"?*
>
> *L: Well, I guess like .. sex isn't really encouraged in . the 'Indian' community. I think my parents would probably be absolutely horrified.* **Lona (F), UK**

Part of the 'problem' with someone who doesn't want to have sex then is that they are too concerned with the appropriate behaviour of an 'Indian'.

Since informants understood love as both physical and emotional and described being 'carried away' by their sexual desire for their partner, this resulted in a preference for sexual behaviour which was unplanned and spontaneous, as illustrated by one woman's description of her first sexual experience:

> *And then we spent the night together for the first time and it just happened but although we'd been talking about it for a long time so we had condoms and the whole thing was safe etc. but it was really blissful and loving and it wasn't planned at all.* **Female, UK**

A strong sympathy for the romantic discourse has been associated with a view that sex should happen 'at the spur of the moment' in multiple other studies. This has been used to understand couples' unwillingness to use condoms which 'interrupt' the spontaneous element in sex (Diekman *et al.* 2000; Rosenthal *et al.* 1998).

Furthermore, the romantic discourse has been linked to an earlier progression to sex in relationships. For example, in a study in the UK Rubin found that the overwhelming majority of his male and female participants valued intimacy more than sex, but those who were in new relationships typically started having sex before they felt they really knew the person. Even those respondents who strongly believed that it is better to delay sex until after getting to know their partner in other ways, found it impossible to do this (Rubin 1990 in Jamieson 1998). For Jamieson, Rubin's findings demonstrate the strength of public stories of the naturalness of sex

when you are in love. These stories portray sex as the ultimate form of intimacy, and promote a quick progression to a sexual relationship (Jamieson 1998:131).

Nonetheless, informants did admit that they had Gujarati friends who valued virginity and more than one of my informants was a virgin waiting until marriage to have sex. Also, many of my informants told me they had changed their opinion about sex since their first or early sexual relationships. Most of the informants had been in long term relationships before having sex for the first time and some had thought they were ultimately going to marry their first sexual partner. Now though, those affiliated to a more 'British identity' moved to sex a lot quicker (some on the first date) and viewed their younger selves as naïve, comparing these 'romantic notions' of one partner for life to an episode from 'Dawson's Creek'[98]. Elsewhere scholars have recognised changing notions of sex and sexuality with age (e.g. West 1999) but I think what most impacted on earlier sexual experiences were ideals around the experience of first sex.[99]

### 7.5.2 Emotional love

Nonetheless, in the UK even though concepts of love and sexual intimacy were 'fused', some informants were reluctant to have their relationship viewed as purely physical and took pains to point out the 'emotional' as well as physical basis for their love. As in India there was some evidence that an over-emphasis on sexual relations suggested your partner (usually a man) was interested in 'just trying to get into your undies':

> *KT: .. And also you mentioned these guys that are trying to get into your underwear. If you met a guy in a bar or over the Internet or wherever how would you know if he was the kind of guy that basically just wanted to sleep with you or if he was somebody who was interested in something . I don't know more long term or something?*
>
> *R: I have no idea. I mean I suppose at a bar, I don't know. . I mean . if he, they ask, you know they sort of, they don't just say oh, they don't just lean and try and kiss you straight away.* **Rama (F), UK**

Rama met her current boyfriend over the Internet and felt it was important to tell me he was interested in her intellectually as well as physically. In the UK as well as India, a purely sexual relationship was 'not serious' and had associations with being 'seedy'.

Still, unlike the India-based informants, men and women in the UK do not delineate two kinds of 'love', rather two kinds of attraction which together make sense to them as love. Here Mahendra talks about when he first realised he was in love with Ameera:

[98] Popular romantic teen television series from the US.
[99] I do not have the space to go into this, but it seemed that informants' understandings of first sex were influenced by sex education materials. Women in particular spoke about waiting until they were 'ready', wanting it to be 'special' and so on. I intend to write about this in the future.

*M: It was just very much more . sort of passionate and from the heart – no head .. and . probably at that very primary feeling of attraction. Not physical .. but at . sort of more emotional attraction. […]*

*K: You immediately said it wasn't physical. I was wondering why, what made you say that?*

*M: Oh, . our …..*

*K: "The attraction was not physical it was emotional."*

*M: .. Yeah that …. maybe if I sort of think about the way I see it, if I sort of that line, from when you first sort of meet someone to . when you sort of grow old and grey with them. There's a physical attraction which really in my world there's a physical attraction which comes first and then an emotional attachment .. or emotional attraction and then attachment and then all the other stuff. So that, that physical attraction was there. That happened pretty much immediately when I first met her. I thought, but then getting to know her, leading up to that point when I went to her room and told her that I was falling in love with her that was the sort of .. the purer emotional attraction. So the physical had just happened before that.* **Mahendra (M), UK**

Although Mahendra recognises physical and emotional aspects to how he felt about Ameera, he merges these together in his feelings.

The fusion of love and sex in the UK was interpreted by some that sex should only happen within the context of love. This was the case for female informants who came from Indian areas or more 'traditional' families - Darsha, Ameera and Prity. These women tended to view sex outside of the discourse of love as cheapening, similar to how Indians from India viewed any physical intimacy outside of marriage. This is discussed further in Chapter Eleven.

## *Conclusion*

I have shown that UK-based informants place a strong emphasis on love when thinking about their marriage or future marriage. Interestingly, there emerges an idea that some love is more authentic than others. This appears to be influenced by the following ideologies: first that 'real' love should 'just happen' and second an attachment to what Macpherson has referred to as 'possessive individualism.' The latter refers to the importance of independence from the wills of others, in particular in creating authentically free relationships (Macpherson 1964). Young people therefore spent considerable time and effort convincing me of the 'natural' progression of their relationships, unaffected by family participation and untainted by 'traditional' or material concerns.

I have also expanded upon how love and physical intimacy are linked for many of my informants; this suggests that love relationships are likely to transition to a sexual relationship before marriage. This helps explain some of the findings of French *et al.* (2005) as reported in Chapter Two. They found that young Indian people were more likely than their parents to report sex before marriage. Informants have views on love which are broadly similar to the UK majority (such as the fusion of love and sex – see Jamieson 1998). But how does this impact on their relationship and marriage choices when 'arranged marriage' is the norm of their families and associated with 'Indian' identity? In Chapter Nine I discuss how these ideals of love and marriage shape practices around courtship and relationships amongst my UK-based informants.

# PART THREE: PRACTICES OF INTIMACY

In the following chapters I discuss the implications of the ideals described in Chapters Four to Seven. First, I consider to what degree the desire for love shapes courtship practices. I outline in Chapters Eight and Nine the different forms marriage took amongst my informants, including older marriage forms and newer forms that integrate 'traditional' and 'modern' ideologies of love and marriage. I also consider to what degree these forms promote choice and agency for young people. In Chapters Ten and Eleven I move on to informants' experiences of marriage. In particular I interrogate to what degree informants manage to create more equal 'companionate marriages', as predicted in Giddens's 'pure relationship'. In the final chapter I draw some conclusions based on my findings and the literature of others.

# Chapter Eight: Arranging love and courtship in Baroda, India

*KT: And do you think your parents will be finding a husband for you or do you think you will be finding your own?*

*Muktha: Means I told you, no? If the boy is good nature, good job, good background, good job, good family, then they agree.*

*KT: Mhmm/*

*M: /But I cannot find! [Laughing] How can I find?!*

*[Both laugh]*

*KT: I don't know! .. Are you looking?*

*M: I am not looking! [Laughing] I think I leave everything to God only. Bas!* [Enough!] *I don't want to think any about it.*

*KT: And which do you think would be better, if you found or your parents found?*

*M:* [Long pause] *If I find! If I find then I say that he is perfect for me, but I cannot find still! And if they found for me, then I check him if he is eh, matches with me, or not, I check him, na? Nowadays what happen that girls are used to take the interview. First time* [before], *initially boys are . come to girl's home and take the interview of her. But nowadays girls are taking the interview of him, take the interview of boys, that 'boy matches with me or not? He is appropriate with me?' . And if she doesn't like then she, she not get marry with him.*

*KT: How many times do they meet normally?*

*M: Means first meeting, if there is eh, if girls and boys, both, are thinking that 'no, she is the one that I am thinking in my dreams!' then they meet second time. Then also they like, 'oh no, she is better, she is good!' Or she think that 'oh I like him' then they tell their mother and father both and then they decide. […]*

*KT: Em, and what would you do if, if you met someone and you wanted to marry him but your parents said no, they didn't like him? . Or they thought he was the wrong/*

*M: /Means I am also mature! I am not immature, I am also thinking that if I like someone, he like by mother and father? I have question in my mind, then only I am . choose anybody. Hmm?* **Muktha (F), India**

## *Introduction*

As indicated in Chapter Four, amongst middle class Gujaratis in India, love is increasingly understood as an important criterion in the selection of a future spouse. But informants delineated

two kinds of love: 'Pure love' is the preferred kind of love which properly occurrs within the boundaries of social propriety. Having this kind of love shows that your relationship is based on more than mere 'attraction'. 'Physical love', on the other hand, is associated with tabooed relationships which are formed without consideration for wider social concerns. Relationships based on 'physical love' are characterised as uncontrollable and short lived, and are perceived as more likely to end in divorce.

In this chapter I explore to what extent a desire for socially acceptable 'pure love' shapes courtship practices, looking specifically at different routes to marriage.[100] I have identified three broad options for marriage available to young people in Baroda: love marriage, love-arranged marriage and arranged marriage. I have delineated these three categories based on my informants' understandings and uses of these terms. The categories are not absolute; they exist on a spectrum from one extreme to another. On one end of the spectrum is a love marriage between, for example, a Hindu-Muslim couple that elope after a secret love affair. On the other end is a marriage arranged entirely by parents, with the couple meeting for the first time on the wedding day, or shortly before. Within these two extremes exist different variations of marriage with differing levels of couple participation and different social consequences. Somewhere in the middle my informants suggested that a 'new' compromised form of marriage was emerging; the love-arranged marriage. As the title suggests, this marriage form has aspects of both 'love' and 'arranged' marriage.

What follows is a description of what these terms mean and the advantages and disadvantages of each model for young people in Baroda, as well as the ways in which young people have crafted and shaped these forms of marriage to suit their desires for 'arranging love'. In the final section I explore to what extent young people can exercise choice and agency within these differing forms of marriage.

## *8.1 Love marriage*

> *Love marriage is not a permissible marriage, so if any problem arise you cannot go to your father and mother that 'I have a problem in affair so what I can do'. […] Now in our society some people will do but society will not agree with him. […] Permission is the main thing and if any problem, main thing is problem. I have seen two three examples that after love marriage so many problems occur, I don't know why but problems occur.* **Tarun (M), India**

[100] As described in Chapter Six, marriage is considered the only viable form for relationships.

Until now I have referred to 'love marriage' as a self-chosen marriage, which is arranged without the involvement of family. This is primarily how it is referred to in the literature cited in Chapter Two. In this section, however, I explain how my informants in Baroda understood love marriage. As Tarun states above, love marriage was considered *"not a permissible marriage".* Amongst my informants a love marriage was by definition a marriage that breaks caste, community or religious barriers and one that is not approved of by family and parents. While some parents might ultimately grudgingly accept the love marriage of their son or daughter, even after elopement, their complete omission from the process of spouse selection, and the fact that their permission was not sought for marriage, makes it a 'love marriage' in the eyes of my informants. As I described in Chapter Four, although informants emphasised the importance of love in choosing their future spouse, this love should only occur within status boundaries and with the permission of parents. Love marriage is perceived as *"impermissible"* since it typically disrupts these tenets. Most informants then were not keen to have a love marriage – far from being idealized love marriages were often denounced by the people I met.[101]

Below I tell the story of Lena and Puneet's marriage, which Lena described to me as a 'love marriage'. I met Lena at a Navratri *garba* when she told me she wanted to take part in the study, in part to discuss her experiences of love marriage. I met Puneet only briefly and he did not participate in any interviews, so the story was only related to me by Lena.

**A love marriage: Lena and Puneet**

Lena is a Brahman and her family, although in Gujarat for generations, are originally from Maharashtra. Her husband is a Gujarati Patel.[102] Lena and Puneet met one another through a common friend when they were both studying at university. She describes falling in love with him gradually as they became closer friends. Puneet on the other hand, apparently knew he wanted to marry Lena within days of meeting her and asked his friend to tell Lena about his feelings for her. Lena told me she was wary of having a love marriage but after a period in hospital when Puneet visited her everyday she realized how much in love he was with her. She also saw during this time that he got on well with her parents, who thought they were just friends. After getting out of hospital, Lena and Puneet decided they would marry one another *"no matter what".*

When they eventually told their parents about their relationship and plan to get married, both sets of parents were against the marriage, in particular Puneet's parents. But Lena told me that eventually their parents realized there was nothing they could do to stop them and they agreed to

[101] There were two exceptions to this: First one man whose parents had divorced after their arranged marriage was adamant that he would choose his own spouse. And second those whose parents had a love marriage told me they were actively encouraged by their parents to choose their own spouse and that their parents were far less concerned than their peers' parents about caste or other issues.
[102] The Brahman caste is the top of the four *varnas*, Puneet as a Patel is part of the Vaishya caste.

hold a wedding ceremony. She says her parents also saw that she cared deeply for Puneet, and both her siblings were married so her marriage was unlikely to affect their future marriage chances. Lena described this period as very difficult, not just because of her parents, but because of the way people whispered about her and her family behind her back:

> *Such marriages are very touchy, inter-caste marriage is still not so much* [accepted]*… You know certain people say you could not find anyone suitable in our own caste so you had to go to another caste. . You know you have to hear such things and you have to go through a very tough times, that's true. That's a real truth of life, if you are having a love marriage then you have to go… through lots of ups and downs.* **Lena (F), India**

Nonetheless, the wedding went ahead. After the wedding she moved in with her husband and his family.

But all did not go smoothly. Lena says Puneet's parents did not accept her and her mother-in-law in particular made life difficult – even at one stage asking her son to divorce Lena. Eventually they decided to move out of the family home and live separately from Puneet's parents. Even so, Lena spent considerable time in the interview stressing the importance of family and family relationships, and how although she has a 'love marriage', her relationship is embedded in larger networks of family and kin. She told me she was proud of the close relationship her husband has managed to maintain with his parents, and says she too has improved relations with them.

### 8.1.2 The difficulties of a love marriage

A love marriage then is one where parents and family were bypassed in the decision because of caste or religious taboos. In a love marriage the couple meet without any help from their family, through for example friends at college or in their neighborhood. If the couple feel they cannot convince their parents for marriage, they may elope and return to their parents with the marriage a *fait accompli*. Others inform their parents of their intentions to get married and 'force' their parents to acquiesce, possibly through insinuations that the couple has already had sex. Whether the couple then live with the groom's family depends on the parents-in-law and their attitude towards their new daughter-in-law. In my experience love marriage couples were eager to live with family as such 'normalising' their marital relationship and re-embedding themselves into the family network. On the other hand, the strong bond between a couple is seen as an advantage for women who can harness this relationship when, such as in Lena's case, her relationship with her mother-in-law breaks down.

As we can see in Lena's descriptions of the reactions to her marriage, love marriage couples and their families can be criticized or even ostracized by society. This is likely to be most severe in the case of a Hindu-Muslim marriage, or in a marriage with large differences in status between the

spouses. Love marriage is considered socially unacceptable since it breaks caste/religious boundaries and notions of family cohesion and filial duty. But families can be deeply disappointed too, not only because of their 'reputation'. Parents 'invest' in their children to assure a 'good marriage' which will either maintain or increase the status of their child, and therefore of their family (Mody 2008). As we saw in Chapter Four, Muktha's parents invested heavily in the education of their son and daughter to ensure a good match for them both. If Muktha were to have a love marriage with someone of a lower class or caste, this would 'waste' their investment and damage both Muktha's and their social standing.

Then love marriage is an option which fulfils the need for love, but which brings other disadvantages and problems. Young people want to fall in love, but with the acceptance of their families and community. In the following section I describe 'love-arranged' marriage, a form of marriage that has apparently developed recently in Baroda, in an attempt to fulfil both societal obligations and personal desires for a romantic self-chosen marriage.

## *8.2 A love-arranged marriage in Baroda*

A love-arranged marriage is one where a young couple meet independently of their family, decide to get married and then arrange it with their parents. This seems to be an increasingly viable option for young people, as long as the person they choose is of the 'right' caste or class. Some informants told me that their parents had signalled their willingness to arrange a marriage with someone their son or daughter had already met. Muktha was one such informant.[103] In the extract at the beginning of this chapter, Muktha tells me that she would like to find someone herself, someone who is *"perfect"* for her. But she is *"mature"* and therefore knows not only what her parents will reasonably accept, but also what makes a good husband: *"good nature, good job, good background, good job, good family."*[104] That is, there are parameters her parents have laid out, but it seems that she too has internalised these parameters; for her, a 'good match' is one with a financially secure man from a *"good family"*. As discussed in Chapter Six, informants not only adhere to their parents' demands, but also believe that a marriage between two members of similar status and background is more likely to last. Only with such a man will Muktha attempt to form a love-arranged marriage. Thus a love-arranged marriage suggests a couple that has been both formed with the permission of parents, but also one that is considered socially suitable.

Unlike those couples in a 'love marriage', in a love-arranged marriage there is every chance that

[103] I interviewed Muktha's mother and she confirmed that they were happy to have Muktha 'arrange' her own marriage with them. She said they were not rigid on caste, but the prospective husband must have a good education and come from a good family.
[104] A "good job" being twice as important as other factors? (!)

the couple will abandon the relationship if their parents are against it. In contrast as we saw above, Lena and Puneet confronted their parents with their mind made up for marriage. Their parents had to either accept the match, or reject their son or daughter.[105] For the love marriage couple, their relationship has taken priority and, as Lena and Puneet told me, they will stay together *"no matter what".* In a love-arranged marriage the couple approach their parents requesting permission to marry – it is presented as the parents' decision as to whether the match will go ahead or not.

This amalgamated form of marriage is further facilitated by an apparently reduced strict adherence to caste boundaries in marriage. That is, some families are accepting a future son or daughter-in-law from a wider pool of castes. For example, Swati has an arranged marriage to Hiren but they are from two different castes. Both are from the Vaishya caste group, but Swati is a Patel and Hiren a Khadayata. She explained:

> *The Patel, Bania, Jains[106] all they are considered as same only so it is not like intercaste marriage, that is the Gujarati getting married to Gujarati. It is the same caste only but individual small group it doesn't make much difference it is the all considered the same.*
> **Swati (F), India**

That is, for her and her family the most important criterion is that both she and her husband are Gujarati. Likewise, in the focus group discussions informants commented on the differing caste status of the fictional characters Shilpa (Brahman) and Vineet (Patel). Most participants seemed to feel that this was not an insurmountable difference, though the Brahman parents (who are from a higher caste group) were presumed to be those who would need the most convincing. Thus it seemed that some parents are open to a potential spouse of a different caste if she or he comes from within a pool of acceptable castes (see also Pache Huber 2004; Corwin 1977). But Hindu-Muslim marriages remain forbidden along with marriages between couples of widely differing status or class.

Love-arranged marriage differs from an arranged marriage primarily by the initiation of the courtship by the couple, as opposed to by the family. Otherwise the processes, as described to me by my informants, in many respects resemble those of an arranged marriage. For example, the brief courtship comes *after* the initial proposal of marriage. Here Rekha, a single Muslim student, describes what she would do if a man proposed a love-arranged marriage to her:

> *KT: What would you do if a boy 'proposed friendship' to you [as in love-arranged marriage]?*

[105] Puneet's parents appeared to reluctantly accept the match but later tried to convince their son to get a divorce.
[106] Patel and Bania are both subcastes of the Vaishya caste group. Jainism is a different religion and so Jains are strictly speaking outside of the caste system, but informants understood Jains to be equivalent to members of the Vaishya caste group.

*Rekha: Firstly I would not go out with the person at the first meeting. I would not. And then… the person, if he is insisting very much, then I would tell him to be just friends first of all. You know cause friendship is the start of every relationship. . […] So, I'll tell him to be friends also. We will meet outside in a group of course, or probably with one or two friends around. Just, share our views. If at all I feel that the person is really serious about the relationship, then, . if he is not there for time pass. I mean, you will get to know how the person feels, how the person takes things, I mean, how one person takes a friend, how much serious he takes his friends that shows how much serious he would take his girlfriend, or whatever. So, eh, through, one or two meetings I can get to know what kind of person he or she is, then if at all I find that person is serious about it, then probably I will go out with the person once.*

*KT: Once?*

*R: Once, just to know, what exactly he is and then if I find the person is really nice and then yeah.*

*KT: Yeah what?*

*R: Then we can go for a relationship.*

*KT: So by go out, you mean go out just the two of you?*

*R: Yeah! Firstly go out with friends and everything, get to know the kind of person he is, how he behaves with people you know? How we behave with people shows how we originally are.*

**Rekha (F), India**

Thus if Rekha is 'proposed' to by a man, she will go out with him three times before making her decision. Twice with friends present, and once alone when she is sure he is serious. This closely resembles an arranged marriage pattern which also normally entails three meetings before the decision for marriage is made. The main difference is the participation of family which in a love-arranged marriage become involved after the couple have met one another. In some circumstances the couple will know one another before the proposal, but as friends. The marriage proposal marks the transition to courtship. Such couple initiated relationships have been observed in other parts of India and are described as the 'best case scenario' since although they show an expression of autonomy they do not disregard filial duty (Mody 2008). Nonetheless, such a marriage is fraught with difficulties and risks. The following case study of a couple who sought a love-arranged marriage illustrates some of these difficulties.

**A love-arranged marriage: Seeta and Ajay**

I came to know Seeta when she moved into the Paying Guest House (PGH) where I was living in Baroda. She was preparing for the entrance exams for a university in the United States where she wanted to pursue a second master's degree, having already obtained her first master's

degree from the UK. Every morning Seeta would go out and return early evening for dinner. She told me and the other PGH occupants that she was spending her days at a preparatory school for US university entrance exams and visa applications. Over time I came to know Seeta more, and in the evenings after dinner a different story began to emerge.

Although Seeta was enrolled in a school to prepare for her entrance exams to a university in the US, she in fact spent her days with her 'friend'[107] Ajay. Sometimes, she told me, they went to see the same film two to three times in one day or spent hours in a café or restaurant. Ajay had been Seeta's boyfriend for one year; they had met while studying together in the UK. Now they were planning to again study together in the US. Seeta had convinced her parents to let her do the university preparatory course in Baroda where Ajay and his family live, though they knew nothing of Ajay.

Since the PGH would not allow boys, there were limited options for Seeta and Ajay to meet one another. She complained about how much money they spent in order to be alone. I asked her why she didn't go to a park or somewhere less expensive but she wrinkled her nose and told me that was 'very cheap'. I asked her what she did at the cinema, watching the same movie over and over, and she laughingly told me that they sat at the back talking, too fearful even to hold hands in case someone somehow saw them together. Their fear of being seen together was heightened by the fact that Seeta and Ajay come from two different castes.[108] In fact, Seeta's parents were at that time trying to arrange her marriage to a recently migrated Indian living in the US.

Soon after she started having telephone calls with the American suitor, Seeta told her mother, Mrs Patel, that she had doubts about this man and would rather marry someone she knew. She told her mother about her friend Ajay who, although he was of a different caste, was a good person with a good (and wealthy) family background. Her mother, who had met Ajay briefly before, enquired more about his family and whether they might accept such a match. Seeta told her she felt they would as they were an 'open minded' family. Mrs Patel then told Seeta she would broach the subject with her father, but in slightly different terms. She told her husband that Ajay's mother had enquired about whether Seeta was available for marriage. She told Mr Patel that even though Seeta and Ajay were different castes, the mother liked Seeta and felt they would make a good match.[109] Seeta told me there had never been a marriage with someone of a different caste in their family before, and thus she felt pessimistic about her father's answer. But

[107] There is a strong reluctance amongst young Gujarati men and women to 'name' a relationship until confirmation of marriage, so 'friend' is frequently used to describe a boy or girlfriend.
[108] Seeta is a Gujarati Patel (part of the Vaishya caste group) and Ajay is a Rajput from Punjab (part of the Kshatriya caste group).
[109] Seeta's mother eventually got in touch with Ajay's mother who I understand brokered a similar arrangement with her husband.

despite Seeta's fears her father did agree to allow her to marry Ajay. She felt this was based on Ajay's family's wealth and his parents' high education, as well as a concern for her feelings, since she had been crying constantly for a week after they suggested she should marry the "American boy".

Seeta tells me her marriage to Ajay is a 'love-arranged marriage', not a love marriage. A crucial issue is that she did not attempt to elope or marry without her parents' permission. Rather she requested permission from them for a selection she had made, showing her primary commitment to her family and filial duty. Rather then confronting her parents with a relationship, she presented Ajay to her mother as a possible alternative to the American suitor. Her mother in turn presents the marriage as a potential 'arranged marriage' to her husband. Nonetheless, Seeta told me that both her mother and her father knew she was in a relationship with Ajay. This had gone unspoken, but it was clear through hints they had both dropped to her. All three of them in their own way emphasise the 'arranged' aspect of this marriage, and downplay the 'love' aspect – even while talking amongst themselves.

### 8.2.1 The difficulties of a love-arranged marriage

As Seeta and Ajay show, a 'love-arranged marriage' is not without its complications. There is a careful balancing act played out in order to ensure that filial duty is seen to take priority over a love relationship. A 'proper' arranged marriage (one in which the parents first choose the spouse or potential spouses) is the traditionally preferred and respectable option for the middle classes. As such there is little history of courtship practices within the middle classes, and a woman's reputation is easily soiled by a premarital relationship (and a man's too to a lesser degree). These disadvantages, along with the means through which my informants attempted to get around them, are outlined below.

*i. Courtship as 'cheap'*

Courtship before marriage or engagement is considered a lower class affair. References to such 'cheap' behaviour, such as Seeta mentioned above, came up frequently in conversations with my informants. In particular it was used to refer to men who approach women for 'time pass' relationships. Those who were in such relationships were generally looked down on by my informants, few of whom admitted to having been in a 'time pass' relationship themselves. Here Durish explains how 'time pass' people get a bad reputation:

> *In society their name is not good, in friends they are not such people… they are not good cause they are using other people for time pass. In front of teachers they are not good cause whenever teacher sees when that person is every time with different people, you know about their character*. **Durish (M), India**

As explained in Chapter Four, time pass relationships are associated with sex before marriage and according to Durish *"people from poor areas"* are far more likely to engage in such behaviour.[110]

For Seeta 'cheap' was associated with couples who meet in parks. This sentiment was echoed by several of my informants while I was in Baroda. In particular it was used in connection with a controversy that arose in a nearby university. A local political advocate released a video of couples kissing on the university campus to local and national media groups. The story appeared in the *Times of India* and the local news television station for three weeks, with regular updates about how the university was increasing surveillance and security on campus.[111] Several of my informants referred to these people caught on camera as 'cheap'. They explained to me that such behaviour should not happen in a university or open space. While they were not against couples kissing necessarily, the public manner in which it was undertaken – in between bushes on campus – suggested both exhibitionism and shame.

Cheap 'time pass' relationships were associated with couples like these who meet furtively in parks and open spaces, while more serious relationships were associated with the still public but 'respectable' cafés and malls. These cafés and malls are public spaces too, but as Phadke points out, they are not "public *public* spaces … entry is ostensibly open but in reality regulated through various subtle and overt acts of (intentional and unintentional) intimidation and exclusion" (Phadke 2007:1514). They are middle class spaces. Since courtship before marriage or engagement is associated with lower-class behaviour, my informants attempted to distance and validate their courtship practices by characterising them as particularly middle class, located in appropriately elite locations. Coffee shops like Café Coffee Day (CCD) are a prime example of such appropriate dating venues. CCD capitalises on this perception through their advertising; their tagline is 'A lot can happen over coffee…' and is usually accompanied by a picture of a well-groomed wealthy couple drinking coffee together. As discussed in Chapter Four, the coffee here is far more expensive than the traditional coffee and chai[112] stalls outside – on the street a coffee costs around four rupees, in CCD it's between 40 and 50 rupees. Phadke (2007) argues that customers use CCD and cafés like it as a means to associate themselves with a progressive 'western' ethos, distancing themselves from the more 'traditional' and 'backward' India just outside the door. I further argue that the expensive context of the café gives a veneer of

[110] As I discuss in Chapter Ten, both men and women said that both sexes had an obligation to remain a virgin until marriage. Having multiple or premarital physical relationships was deemed 'cheap' regardless of the sex of the transgressor. Nonetheless, the consequences were greater for women; such a blemish on her reputation was likely to impact on her marriageability and that of her siblings. Additionally informants spent far more *energy* in denigrating women who had multiple relationships rather than men. It seemed that in men (and not women) such transgressions were forgivable.

[111] In reaction, the campus security issued a new policy of checking the identity of all people entering the campus – the suggestion being that it was not university staff and students misbehaving.

[112] Indian tea

respectability to courtship, since young people can disassociate their courtship from the 'cheap' behaviour which the lower or 'backward' classes involve themselves in, in parks and other free open spaces.[113] Such respectable courtship then depends on new sites, such as CCD and, as we saw with Seeta, the appropriate financial resources to sustain it.

*ii. Possibility of relationships ending*

Only relationships that lead to marriage are considered 'legitimate' by my informants. When the relationship does not result in marriage it can be devastating for the couple, especially if the relationship was public. Several years ago Muktha had been in a relationship with her neighbour for almost a year. Although he 'proposed friendship' and she tells me 'they were just friends',[114] she still feels 'cheated' by him since the relationship ultimately did not progress to marriage:

> *Muktha: What I am saying that, if that boy is meet me this time, then I should not do . what I am done with him. Now I am understanding that no, he cheat me! He just time passed with me, because, what I want to say you? …. He just want to time pass with me, but I don't know anything at that time. I am just thinking in that moment only. That eh, 'okay, I feeling . good!'*
>
> *KT: Mhmm .. So why do you say that he cheated?*
>
> *M: Cause now he is not wanting, now, this day only, nowadays, he don't want to talk with me, I am trying, last year also I tried to talk with him, but he, he is not agree.*
>
> *KT: So what did you want?*
>
> *M: Means, I know that the marriage is not possible, because he is from different caste, and I am also, but it is not that cause if he forces mother father and 'I want to marry with her' and I am also, I can also tell my father and mother, but if he only, he only the culprit who . whom I want to marry, then what I am / what*
>
> *KT: /mhmm*
>
> *M: I can do? He just don't want to talk with me also.*
>
> *KT: Would you like to marry him?*
>
> *M: But! Yes, I, sometimes feel I want to marry him but I think that, if he doesn't love me, then . there is no meaning, na? . Everybody wants to marry with some boy or girl who loves him, loves him or her.* **Muktha (F), India**

Looking back on the relationship now, Muktha views it as a 'time pass' relationship. At the time, she was thinking *"in that moment only",* but it is clear that she expected or at least hoped for marriage – his proposal of friendship implied as much. Even as now she doubts his love for her

[113] See Phadke (2005) for a discussion on the strict separation of the private and the public in Indian Cinema so that 'good women' can be distinguished from 'bad' i.e. women who are portrayed 'outside' are implicitly associated with sex workers and 'easy' women, while the 'good' women are portrayed in private spaces such as the home, reinforcing their 'family' status and their sexuality as private.

[114] As mentioned above, informants refer rather ambiguously to their relationships as 'friendships' until marriage has been arranged with family. To 'propose friendship' infers the beginning of a relationship and is interpreted as a suggestion for marriage.

and he ignores her calls, she tells me she still harbours hopes that the relationship can be resolved and that they will marry. Because the relationship has not resulted in marriage she must reassess her relationship with him and unwillingly acknowledges that it was ultimately a time pass relationship. For Muktha, the proper, expected ending to this story has been interrupted. A respectable middle class girl should only be in a relationship that will lead to marriage. Now, in her past, she has this time pass relationship against her own volition.

Muktha's story demonstrates that it is more important for women to feel that a relationship will progress to marriage than for men. The 'dangers' of courtship were more acutely felt by my female informants. Primarily this is due to the traditional importance placed on a woman's virginity before marriage, as I discuss in Chapter Ten, but even non-physical relationships can be damaging to her reputation. For this reason women were very cautious in their relationships and often kept them hidden even from peers until marriage had been negotiated with family. Men appeared to be less concerned for their reputation, though the label of 'cheapness' could be attached to either sex.

*iii. Parents may not accept a love-arranged marriage*

Finally, no matter how many boxes your suitor ticks, there is still a risk that parents will not accept your chosen spouse. Many parents feel the 'cool head' of the parent is more appropriate in choosing a spouse for their son or daughter (see also Donner 2008). And while some parents do not mind small caste differences, others are less open. Having an inter-caste marriage can still damage the reputation of a family. In part Seeta's parents seemed to accept her marriage to Ajay because both Seeta and Ajay were planning to emigrate to the US together. It was felt that the distance from the family and the foreign norms would protect their reputation.

Another young woman I met, Anita, was in a relationship she hoped to 'arrange' with her parents. Unfortunately her parents discovered her relationship before she had a chance to negotiate with them. Upset and disturbed by the fact that she had had a relationship without their knowing, her parents quickly arranged a marriage for her with another man, without giving her any choice or say in the matter. As such, her attempt to have a love-arranged marriage compromised any autonomy or choice she may have been given in an arranged marriage. Given the pitfalls and misunderstandings that are rife in a love-arranged marriage, many young people expressed a preference to have a 'proper' arranged marriage, even as they want to marry for love. As one informant told me *"I want love to be arranged!"* In the following section I describe the second and most common way in which my informants created a marriage, or rather an interpretation of their marriage, one that met both societal obligations and personal goals of a romantic marriage.

## *8.3 A modern arranged marriage in Baroda*

> *KT: And then what is the difference between arranged marriage and love marriage?*
> *Tarun: Arranged marriage is the done by the permission of all the people, means parents. […] So according to me that type* [arranged marriage] *only is possible.* ***Tarun* (M)*, India***

Young people expressed a preference to choose their future partner and to marry 'only that person who loved' them, but arranged marriage is still the dominant and preferred model of spouse selection. Young people found it acceptable to be in a relationship before marriage but this was only the case if it was with the 'right' person, and would progress to marriage. Anything else was foolish and a waste of time, not 'serious', just 'time pass.' As I have explained, women in particular take a risk engaging in a relationship before marriage because if it doesn't result in marriage her marriage-ability declines, as well as that of their siblings.

The most typical arrangement procedures described to me were as follows: At some point, parents (generally) decide that their son or daughter is ready to get married. In my experience, this was just after the university graduation of the girl, and a few years after this for the boy. The parents or family then begin to send out messages through family and friends that they are ready to see potential spouses for their son or daughter. Some create a 'bio' (biography) for their son or daughter, a sort of curriculum vitae with additional information about physical appearance and pastimes. These bios are then exchanged amongst families of potential spouses. Other families were less formal and passed around information by word of mouth, such as 'she is from a good family, she has a degree in Home Science' and so on.

Some informants also used classified advertisements in the newspapers (see Appendix E), or matrimonial websites such as shaadi.com and bharatmatrimony.com. There websites are international and thus anyone around the world can register as a site member (there are many Indians who live abroad and some second generation Indians too). Members fill in details about themselves, as well as details about their preferred spouse.[115] These forms are very comprehensive, including details about physical appearance, caste background, education, salary, and work experience (see Appendix E for an example of a matrimonial website form). Members can also pay extra to receive face-to-face guidance from a company advisor, one of whom I interviewed. She told me she helps people fill in their 'bio' forms and suggests potential matches. This 'counsellor' also visits the home of male members, thereby judging the house the future wife will likely live in. She can then advise potential female suitors on the suitability of the house for life after marriage. Despite the comprehensiveness of this service most people told me that finding a spouse through contacts is considered more reliable. In the case of an introduction

[115] Often parents fill in the profiles for their son or daughter.

organised through common friends, parents can conduct some 'research' through the social grapevine – such as asking neighbours about the family's reputation, whether the prospective suitor drinks or smokes and so on. This is only possible if there is a common connection between the two families, less likely when a matrimonial website is used.

Once contact has been made with the family of a potential spouse a meeting is arranged between the two families. At the initial meeting the parents of the boy might 'interview' the girl (I rarely heard of the reverse) and have some general chit chat. After some time, the young couple go into a separate room to speak to one another alone. In the separate meeting I was told that the couple have a very general conversation, asking about pastimes, job prospects, and education. After this first meeting, both families discuss with their son or daughter how they feel the meeting went. If there is some enthusiasm on the part of the son, the man's family will normally ring the woman's family asking for a second meeting. If they say yes, then the man will contact the woman directly and they will arrange to meet separately themselves in a café or restaurant. Friends or siblings might come along to this meeting, though generally it's conducted alone. If this meeting also goes well, the couple may have some telephone conversations and arrange to meet a third time. Usually at the third meeting the decision of whether or not to continue for marriage is made.

Once the decision has been made the couple are considered to be committed to one another. From then on they can date one another freely and without supervision. At some stage the couple will have a formal engagement ceremony, which nowadays includes an exchange of rings. While the relationship can be cut off during this engaged period, it is rare. If it does happen it would be considered potentially damaging to the woman's reputation and to some extent the man's. Most couples I met were married within six months to a year after the first meeting.

This seemed to be the most typical arrangement procedure amongst the people I met, though there was some variation. In particular some informants appeared to be given more choice than others. For example, Toni told me he had seen over 50 women at the time of our last interview. Priya, on the other hand, was shown only three men from whom she had to choose. One was twice her age, the second refused her almost instantly (she surmised that he was already in a love relationship) and Bipin, the man she ultimately married, was left. She spoke for only five minutes with Bipin, as she describes here:

*KT: .. So what were those five minutes like?*

*Priya: Ahm, … 'what's my age? My birth date, my name, what I am studying and after marriage what I am doing, job or not job. And, .. I say him, what are his qualifications.*

*KT: That's it?*

*P: Only five minutes!!*

*KT: […] Why did you say yes?*

*P: I was sure that whatever my parents have looked for me, would be better for me only. Because they did proper research, almost for one month.* **Priya (F), India**

Priya justifies her acceptance of Bipin by the fact that she trusts her parents' choice. She says she is sure they did the 'proper research'. This is despite the fact that the first man she was introduced to was twice her age and was also apparently 'researched', yet her parents were unaware of how old he was. Since her parents had shown her only three men, and the other two were inappropriate or unattainable, Priya might seem to have had little choice. Nonetheless, now she is married to Bipin and tells me she is happy with him.

It's difficult to know whether the differences in these last two examples were due to gender or class. Toni is certainly upper middle class, while Priya's family shows many of the attributes of lower middle class. I was told that more affluent families are likelier to offer their children more choice, perhaps because these parents feel they have more options open to them. As discussed in the previous chapter, 'choice' is bound up with discourses of modernity and class and thus many informants made a considerable effort to convince me of the choice available to them even when, as in the case of Priya, there was little evidence of choice.

### 8.3.1 Romancing arranged marriage

Many informants considered a marriage formed outside of arranged marriage procedures too risky, yet they still emphasised the importance of love in choosing their future spouse. Having an arranged marriage did not prevent them from viewing their marriage, or future marriage, as romantic or companionate. In particular, I would argue that the period between introduction and marriage fulfils the need or desire for romantic 'courtship' by creating a 'safe' parent-sanctioned space with an approved beau. Hence even those couples that do not have relationships before marriage paint a very romantic picture of their engagement and being in love at the point of marriage. For example, Aditya and Geet have, as they describe it, an 'arranged marriage'. A common family friend acted as a matchmaker and facilitated their introduction. After three meetings Aditya told me they decided to go ahead for marriage. He described his decision to marry Geet thus:

*I had drawn some parameters because you cannot get everything, you just have to draw parameters and then choose from that which one suits you. That's how I put down certain things and if these things comes I will go ahead… she was more or less fitting into that parameters, and I decided to go further with her.* **Aditya (M), India**

From a western perspective, relationship stories would normally progress from a romantic courtship but Aditya and other informants' characterisations of meeting and selecting spouses were far from romantic and seemed in fact much more strategic. Many of them spoke of

parameters and lists which they ticked off as they met a prospective spouse. As mentioned in Chapter Six the pragmatic discourse was emphasised more heavily by male informants, but women too had criteria of a good spouse and explained how they made their selection within those terms.

But even as the selection is described in quite pragmatic terms, the period directly *after* choosing the future spouse, from selection to early marriage, was in contrast described as a time of romantic love-making. Aditya and Geet warmly related their dating experiences between the introduction and marriage; Geet told me *"I do not feel it was an arranged marriage, it was like a love marriage."* Likewise Swati, who also had an arranged marriage, describes her engagement to her husband Hiren:

> *Whenever we get time, we were just going . on his bike to Sind road*[116] *and sit there for a while and then going back. And go to, we have visited almost every restaurant and café during that time! [Laughs] It was very free and . like romantic time.* **Swati (F), India**

Many of the couples I observed courting in cafés were already engaged, particularly those that were most affectionate.[117] These couples have been granted the freedom to date by their parents and in fact are actively encouraged to do so. 'Freedom' was described to me as one of the major attractions of the engagement period. After marriage, couples are expected to take on 'family' responsibilities. It is during the period directly after the decision to marry that couples told me they fell in love. In Chapter Six I described how Swati's husband Hiren told me that a 'love marriage' was bound to fail since the initial attraction would ware off within the first couple of years. Yet he told me, "*I told her* [Swati] *I loved her genuinely in my heart"* just a few days after their introduction.

Despite my scepticism, my informants saw no contradiction in this rapid move from pragmatism to romance. As Rebhun comments 'western' researchers "tend to believe that sentiment is genuine only if it is spontaneous; conventional, required, manipulated sentiment seems false… and its falseness morally reprehensible… but deliberation and requirement are as much a part of emotion as spontaneity" (Rebhun 1999:29-30). *C*hoosing to fall in love does not negate the emotion. Similar findings on 'manipulated' emotion have been uncovered by research in Brazil, South India, Micronesia, and Iran (Rebhun 1999; Trawick 1990; Lutz 1988; Abu-Lughod 1987).

In understanding informants' 'decision' to love, I have drawn on the work of sociologist Arlie Hochschild. As described in Chapter Two Hochschild proposes that individuals apply cultural and ideological standards in gauging the suitability of emotions in different contexts (1983). Through 'deep acting' an individual will push her or himself to actually experience the appropriate emotions

[116] Sind road was the local romantic spot, about twenty minutes drive outside the city overlooking a river.
[117] Kissing in public was rare but couples held hands and/or put their arms around one another's chairs.

at the appropriate time. It seemed to me that informants were creating love for their partner during the engagement period, so that the contemporary ideal of modern marriage as loving is met. From my understanding young people in Baroda are deliberately choosing to 'fall in love' with their fiancé(e), creating a temporal space for the courtship and romance they so desire without breaking any societal taboos. As Swati told me, "*Love marriage love is there before you get married, before you decide, arranged marriage is after you decide love comes."* Notice how it is after the decision to marry that love comes - choose your partner according to certain criteria and then expect (or perhaps provoke) a love for your future spouse. As the matrimonial website Shaadi.com says *"arrange your own love marriage."*

## *8.4 Choice and agency*

As discussed in Chapter Six, exercising 'choice' in the selection of a future spouse is a key issue to young people and associated with 'modern' courtship and marriage. Informants in whatever kind of marriage were adamant that they were making the choice of who to marry, but often it appeared to me that there was little or no choice offered to my informants. For example Nirali, a young nursing student in Baroda, was introduced to a man for marriage but told me she was not ready to marry and in addition did not like the man she met. Nonetheless her mother told her *"you will be married within fifteen days"*. As Nirali talks to me about this, she reiterates that she will only marry someone of her own choosing, even as she concedes that she will probably marry this man. In the end, his grandmother dies and he decides to delay his marriage decision.

As much as Nirali emphasises her ability to choose, she also appears to desire her parents' involvement, and potentially appreciates the responsibility they take in choosing a spouse for her. She both espouses the right of the individual to choose and appreciates the value of deferring to her parents' judgement. Likewise a recent national survey conducted in India found that 59% of young, urban men and women agreed that parents should have the final say in the selection of a spouse (Centre for the Study of Developing Societies 2007 in Donner 2008). It seems then that while young people want more agency than their parents had before them, they do not embrace a full move towards couple-selected marriage (see Donner Forthcoming for similar findings). As Mody observes in her study of New Delhi love marriage couples: "Couples aren't trying to a build a 'couple' who get married, but rather try to build a couple within a web of relations which are essential to their survival" (Mody 2008:244). She argues that for many Indians, "The notion of individual 'rights' devoid of parental support and family love are empty concepts" (2008:243). Young people's agency is tempered by the effect their choices will have on their families and their relationships with them. Indeed, their agency and that of their parents seems to be understood for some informants as inseparable.

But with increased emphasis on 'love' as a prerequisite for marriage, shared decision-making relies on an ability to 'fall in love' with the 'right person'. If a person desires a partner that does not coincide with their parents' or society's views of a good match then, as Mody comments, "agency becomes a contested site, and selfhood a contested arena" (Mody 2008:279). Such a situation reveals the tension between the view that a 'modern' marriage entails love and choice, and marriage as a means to extend and solidify family networks. Since many young people have internalised family and societal ideals of what makes a good spouse – that is, equally young people prefer to marry someone of the same caste and class background – problems rarely arise. But love marriages do take place and the consequences can be tragic. Newspapers are full of reports of couples driven to suicide, or even murdered by their families. These are extreme examples, which may be less common amongst urban middle class couples, but other negative consequences can occur. As mentioned above, families can suffer in addition to the couple; siblings may become unmarriageable and parents socially ostracised. Such penalties for love marriage call into question the agency available to young people in their marital decisions. Below I describe one couple who struggled with their decision over whether to have a love marriage or not which illustrates these issues.

**Milly and Vineet**

Milly and Vineet are a couple I met while in Baroda. They have been together for over seven years, but since Milly is a Punjabi from the Rajput caste and Vineet is a Gujarati from the potter caste,[118] they have never married. About a year ago Vineet's parents started to arrange his marriage. He tried to convince Milly at this time to marry him but she refused because he is from a lower caste and not Punjabi. He is also dark, while she is pale, which suggests an ill match. She told me that although she loves him, she knows her parents would never allow it and a love marriage would bring great shame on the family.

Nonetheless, Milly and Vineet continued their relationship and his parents arranged for his marriage to another girl, Malika. In tragic detail, Milly described to me attending Vineet's wedding dressed in bridal garb so she could at least imagine that they were getting married. She told me that soon afterwards he went on honeymoon with his wife, but everyday he rang her (as he continues to do) and he brought back jewellery for her as a gift. Meanwhile Malika has become aware of the relationship. At one point when I was out with Milly, Malika, Vineet and his friends, an uncomfortable situation arose:

> ***[From fieldnotes]*** *There were ten of us sitting in the dining hall, boys and girls. Vineet's sister was there too and she was often holding Malika's hand. Vineet and Malika have been married for six months and seeing her there interacting with these people made me very*

[118] Rajputs are Kshatriya caste group and the potter caste is part of the Vaishya caste group.

*aware of what it must be like to leave your town and friends and have to make friends with all your husband's friends. […] At one stage one of the boys made a joke and Milly seemed to take it badly. Malika and Milly stood up at the same time. Milly told me we had to leave. I thought Malika looked upset but I didn't understand what was happening.*[119] *Later in the car Milly told me that someone had said something about Vineet's wife, and this boy had said "which one?!" Referring to Milly's relationship with Vineet.*

Even though Malika knows about Milly and Vineet's relationship, there is nothing she can do. As Milly explains, she has no alternative but to put up with it. She is from a village and divorce for her would be unthinkable.

Milly and I had endless conversations about her predicament. She told me she felt sorry for Malika, but equally she felt unable to stay away from Vineet. She is aware that Malika must have had similar aspirations to her when she married Vineet, which are now destroyed. But in her defence she reiterated time and again to me her inability to convince her parents of this marriage. When she had tentatively suggested it to her mother, she had been flat out refused; Vineet is dark, of a lower caste and of a less wealthy family. But equally a love marriage was unthinkable to Milly. It would jeopardise her younger brother's future marriage and spoil the reputation of her parents. Her family lived in a society within the factory grounds where her father worked, thus heightening the consequences of any perceived misdemeanour.

Milly and Vineet's relationship brings into question my earlier pronouncements of young people arranging love with the 'right' person. Ultimately such control is not absolute. In the end, Milly rejects love as the primary basis for marriage and decides to marry the man her parents chose for her. As seen in Chapter Six, however, she has already started to construct that relationship as one of her choice, and as one in which there is love. In talking about the man her parents are arranging for her to marry, she tells me *"he is crazy about me!"* The same thing she told me about Vineet. Paradoxically she has also told this suitor about her 'friend' Vineet and debates with me whether she can continue her relationship even after marriage, as Vineet has done with her.

Vineet and Milly's situation was not unique. Other people too told me about couples who had a 'third' person involved and Mody in her study of love marriages in Delhi found many more examples (Mody 2008). These stories reflect the downside of arranged marriage and call into question the degree of young people's level of choice and agency in their marital decisions.

[119] They were speaking in Hindi.

## *Conclusion*

In India young men and women aspire to a 'modern' identity which positions love and romance as a prerequisite for marriage. But social taboos and a legacy of an ideal chaste Indian woman restrict young couples from courting before engagement or with anyone who their parents might not approve. Furthermore, marriage is a means to increase social ranking and wealth by marrying someone of an equal or higher status. In an attempt to create marriages which meet both romantic and 'traditional' ideals, young people attempt to arrange love within socially acceptable boundaries. There were two main ways which informants did this; through initiating a 'love-arranged marriage' or by infusing arranged marriage processes with a romantic interpretation. These strategies serve to perpetuate the system of arranged marriage and the continued ostracism of love marriage and love marriage couples.

# Chapter Nine: British Gujaratis negotiating courtship in the UK

*You know, I am going to – if I am going to marry someone it has to be on my terms and . in the sense that you have to love them.* **Pretak (M), UK**

## *Introduction*

As seen in Chapter Seven, UK informants placed more emphasis on a romantic discourse than their contempories in India. They described love as a spontaneous and overwhelming emotion, of which physical intimacy was an integral part. Informants were keen to distance themselves from any sense of 'arrangement' in their relationships, and stressed how their relationship 'naturally' evolved. In this chapter I describe how these ideologies shaped courtship and marriage practices.

In the UK informants referred to two kinds of marriage; 'introduced marriage' and 'love marriage'. Both of these have particular aspects which set them apart from arranged and love marriage as described in the Indian context. Both models of marriage are informed by the preference for and discourse of 'love above all else'. But, as with marriage forms described in the last chapter, these are not rigid definitions but rather exist on a spectrum with informants leaning more towards one side or the other.

## *9.1 An 'introduced marriage'*

*I don't want to have the word 'arranged' because I think that's changed so much. It's not, even in my parents' day there was – it was an introduction. I think it varies from culture to culture, community to community. And like my parents met only a few times and they were engaged a week after but it was their choice. It wasn't 'you have to marry this guy'. Meet him, if you like and you know, get to know him better, if not, move on.* **Prity (F), UK**

While the term 'arranged marriage' is often used in the media and scholarly texts on marriage amongst South Asians in Britain, my informants felt that it was an outdated term that did not represent their or their peers' experiences (see also Prinjha 1999). Nonetheless, as argued in Chapter Two, much of the literature has focused on explaining or describing formal arranged marriage processes in the UK. Ballard (1977), Michaelson (1983) and Bhachu (1985), for example, all focus on arranged marriages. But for my informants 'arranged marriage' was

associated with very formal systems of arrangement, more likely to occur in other 'more traditional' communities or in India.[120]

As we can see from Prity above 'arranged marriage' seems to be associated in the UK with a lack of choice on the part of the couple. Although Prity doesn't mention 'forced marriage', the fact that she feels even her parents didn't have an arranged marriage, and her stress on the agency of young people participating in introduced marriage suggests that the term arranged marriage has become associated with 'forced marriage'. Likewise Yogesh, who was going through introductions when I interviewed him, felt that 'arranged marriage' suggested a lack of control on the part of the couple:

> *KT: And if you end up marrying* [girl Yogesh has been introduced to]*, would you say that it's an arranged marriage?*
>
> *Y: No, not an arranged marriage. An arranged marriage is contracted, A marries B, it's not in your control, a third party arranges it. I would call it… introduction, like a dating agency.*
>
> **Yogesh (M), UK**

Yogesh associates 'arranged marriage' with a more formal (unromantic?) 'contract' like process. Like all my informants in the UK, Yogesh preferred the term 'introduced' marriage, which he equated with blind dates or using a dating agency.

Informants described an introduced marriage as follows: If, for example, a man decides he is ready for marriage his parents will send out his details to eligible suitors and collect information about potential spouses for their son. This exchange of information may be minimal – simply names and numbers – or there may be an exchange of 'biographies' such as those passed around in India. Informants in the UK also used Internet sites, such as in India. There are two kinds of websites; 'dating websites' and 'matrimonial' websites. Dating websites are similar to those used by the white majority in the UK,[121] in fact many Asian dating websites have a sister website which is not targeted at any ethnic group. For example, 'Asian Single Solution' which according to their website is specifically for "second and third generation British Asian professionals" (www.asiansinglesolution.com), also has an identical 'Single Solution' website (www.singlesolution.com). These websites make no mention of the word 'marriage', instead members are encouraged to find their perfect 'match' or 'date'. In contrast, matrimonial websites are geared much more towards marriage and are also more family oriented – many of the profiles I read were placed by parents. None of my informants used matrimonial websites and from my own investigations very few second generation Gujaratis appear to do so. For example, I

[120] The only examples I came across of more formally arranged marriage processes in the UK were related to second generation British Indian men marrying India-born women. This was particularly looked down on by my informants who suggested that the UK-born man was looking for a more servile kind of woman.

[121] Such as the 'Soulmates' Guardian dating website (www.guardian.com/soulmates) or Match™ Dating (www.match.com.)

searched for female Gujaratis aged between 22 and 35 years registered with Bharat Matrimony.[122] I found 2,767 women registered that met those criteria, of which only 55 had UK citizenship. It was not possible to search by country of birth, but only two of the 12 profiles I read were of women born in the UK.[123] Parents placed both of these advertisements.

In addition to the online dating, informants attended speed dating events, Asian singles' nights and local (normally caste based) matchmaking events (as described in Chapter Three). The former were associated with, and often commercially arranged by, organisations such as Asian Single Solution. These were held late at night in bars or nightclubs, with young assistants facilitating introductions between attendees. The matchmaking events were organised by local volunteers or caste-based organisations, held during the day in a school hall or community centre and with no alcohol served. Unlike the commercially organised events, family members were present at the matchmaking events. The fact that the commercially organised events and websites do not have any family involvement (and perhaps because they are similarly used by other ethnic groups) meant that they were not associated with 'introduced' marriage by my informants but rather categorised as a kind of 'love marriage' courtship.

As such 'introduced marriage' couples are described as meeting either through family introductions, a local matchmaker or, less commonly, using a matrimonial website.[124] The common factor between all these seems to be the participation of family who mediate not only the process but also the eligibility criteria. The criteria of eligibility for couples within introductions are more or less the same as those found in India, such as education and height[125], but caste seems to be of less importance. Many informants told me that they had no preference over caste and nor did their parents, but an introduction process normally is done within the same caste – in part because these are the networks that parents can avail of. A matchmaker I interviewed also told me it was unusual nowadays for people to request someone from the same caste. He said that the few times that this had happened the person usually had such a difficult time finding a match that they soon changed their mind. Once the couple has made contact through one of these methods, they arrange to meet one another alone in a bar, restaurant, or café. From there the couple can decide to continue into a relationship, which may or may not ultimately lead to marriage, though of course they are meeting with the idea of marriage in mind (see Appendix D for a short film on a London-based matchmaker).

[122] Popular matrimonial website
[123] Search done on the 29th July 2010 on www.bharatmatrimony.com
[124] As with 'arranged marriage', matrimonial websites were associated by my informants with second generation men who seek to marry an India-born woman.
[125] It's considered best if the man is two or three inches taller than the woman.

The chief differences between older formal arranged marriages and 'introductions' seemed to be the level of choice available to young people and the time a couple is given before deciding for marriage. As Lona explains:

> *KT: What's the difference in the older generation?*
>
> *L: Well you just meet so many people or so many couples that just don't actually get along. You know they live together and they . exist together I think more, is more to the point. But they don't, I mean I don't think they would ever have chosen each other in a million years. So*
>
> *KT: Why is that difference there . with that generation?*
>
> *L: I don't think they ever got the chance to spend as much time with that person and also I don't know but .. I don't think you could say no to too many guys [Laughs] do you know what I mean? So by the time you got to the tenth or whatever, maybe there was a bit more pressure to say "yeah all right then."* **Lona (F), UK**

The implication is that in an introduction the couple has time to fall in love and get to know one another before marriage, unlike the older generation many of whom simply *"exist together*" after being pressured into a decision to marry.

The introduced marriage both by its terminology (not 'arranged' but 'introduced') and by the increased time afforded to the couple, suggests much more agency on the part of young people. In talking about 'introduced marriage' informants stressed the *lack* of parental participation, even as they defined introduced marriage as one facilitated by family. As such, the 'arranged' aspect is virtually disregarded, and rather the possibility of a couple falling in love through an introduction is emphasized. The couple are portrayed as the ones in control.

### 9.1.1 Introduced marriage as 'last resort'

Yet even as informants pointed out the 'modern' aspects of introduced marriage in the UK and the similarities it has with meeting through a 'dating agency', many referred to an introduction as a 'last resort' and preferred to meet their future spouse outside of the introductions process. Informants suggested that 'arranged' or 'introduced' marriage was outdated and that any 'modern' person would choose a love marriage – if they could. Here Mahendra tells me that introductions are not for 'our generation':

> *My parents they essentially had an arranged marriage or an introduced marriage. My uncle and, both my uncles did and I can't think of anybody in my parents' generation who didn't . but in our generation . yeah I don't think . I know one guy who's had an introduced marriage in that manner and . yeah it just doesn't seem .. it seems a bit forward in our generation.* **Mahendra (M), UK**

Informants often distanced themselves from the kinds of people who practice introduced marriage, associating it with more 'traditional' communities in the UK or India. Those who meet through introductions, my informants implied, were people who couldn't find someone through the 'normal' way i.e., through the conventional ways that English people meet. As Sohan suggests:

> *Yeah I mean at the time there's no way I would have done that* [introduced marriage]. *I wouldn't even entertain the thought but maybe if I got to say my age or a couple of years older and most of my friends were married .. I might, I probably, I guess I probably would have considered it.* **Sohan (M), UK**

Even those who were going through introductions seemed to feel ambiguous about it; while they described the advantages, they also told me they felt arranged or introduced marriages were 'weird'. To some degree this might have to do with the association of introductions with the 'last resort', or to who they were talking to (a non-Indian) but primarily I think the introduction process interrupts the dominant romantic story which UK-based Indians subscribe to.

*Introduced marriage and romantic love*

As described in Chapter Seven, informants described love and desire together as an irrational and overpowering force, linking love with ideals of 'fate' such as the *"universe throwing two people together"* (Renu). The 'premeditated nature' of the introduction process conversely takes a more rational and considered approach to marriage and relationships, which clashes with informants' romantic ideals. Informants felt this rational 'premeditated' approach inhibited the natural development of emotions and attraction between a couple. As Mahendra explains:

> *I don't think … I don't feel like a premeditated .. process . allows for a complete expression of . of yourself. . You . you know it's like a, like a job interview but rather than testing your skills, it's just a complete, it's 100% emotion .. sorry there's an attraction and emotion but I mean how can you measure your emotions, how can you test your emotions ….. over a short period of time? … If you meet enough people you're going to find somebody . and even find somebody you'll have a wonderful relationship with I'm sure. Millions of people have done it so .. I certainly can't be . well that's proven but .. you've, I think you've got to meet a lot of people .. to find, to get that right rather than being able to .. just let natural attraction take you to somebody. … And going through that process of just meeting a lot of people just doesn't seem to, just doesn't seem right to me.*
>
> **Mahendra (M), UK**

Mahendra conjures up the image of a *"job interview*" in referring to marriage introductions, emphasizing the formal nature of the meeting in which the two suitors 'interview' one another for suitability. He further suggests that couples in an introduced marriage might have a 'wonderful' relationship, but it might not be a *"natural attraction"*– implying that the couple get on well, have

things in common but are not *really* in love. Rather they have prioritized more 'rational' aspects of choosing a spouse over irrational spontaneous 'natural' love.

As such informants felt that those who go through an introduced marriage have more 'superficial' criteria with respect to their future spouse, such as looking for a wealthy or well-educated person, rather than marrying for love. Consider the following extract from one of Rama's interviews where she outlines her aversion to arranged or introduced marriage:

> *I mean it really sounds a bit meat marketing. That's what put me off in the first place. This is my whole issue where I was like you know, I am not buying a bike or anything and that's what you are making it sound like, how tall is he, how old is he, what does he do for a living and you know, and then your specifications would be to you. […] It seems so cold and almost brutal, you know, "what are you looking for?" The way that they were treating it like I said, you know, marriages are a rite of passage. And that you got to do it, so – like there is a set formula, you know. Like this girl who has got ABC attributes is a hundred percent compatible with him over there with DEF attributes and that's it and that's your perfect formula and it's not that simple.* **Rama (F), UK**

The 'specifications' suitors swap in order to find an appropriate partner conflict with Rama's understanding of love and marriage. To her, this approach is too 'cold', and feels more like 'buying a bike' than falling in love. She also feels that this approach portrays marriage *"as a rite of passage",* whereas for her marriage should only happen if two people fall in love.

While in India informants openly talked about the importance of finding a spouse that earns enough money or has a sufficiently good education, in the UK such concerns were largely taboo and jarred with the romantic narrative they created around their relationships. For example, Yogesh, who was going through introductions, told me that he received a list of eligible women from his mother that included specifications such as height, age, and education. He rejected the list and told his mother that he would prefer to meet someone himself, finding the list too 'weird'. Later his aunt gave him a list of names and telephone numbers of *"girls she thought he would like"* who he proceeded to meet. In retrospect he realised that the two lists were the same, but the latter one didn't include any 'specifications'. Yogesh laughed at his own inconsistency but to me this points to the ambiguous feelings informants had towards the introduction process, in particular those aspects which suggest more 'superficial' concerns than love.

Finally, an introduced marriage seems to give less freedom to the couple in arranging their own relationship. Despite Lona's statement that in an introduced marriage there is time for the couple to fall in love, other informants noted the pressure parents place on the introduced couple to decide whether or not they will go forward for marriage. Their meeting is obviously known to both

families, who may be eager to see their son or daughter married to someone they feel is appropriate. To some extent this puts a time limit on the relationship. This can differ from family to family; Pretak was introduced to one girl whose family wanted to know whether they were ready for marriage within a month. Others told me they went out for six months before deciding to marry. As discussed below, in a non-introduced marriage, the couple are able to keep the relationship secret from their parents, thus deciding in their own time whether and when to go for marriage.

It's also unlikely that parents will allow an introduced couple to live together before marriage. This was a concern for some of my informants and put them off the introduction process since many informants felt that to really 'know' someone, it was necessary to live with them before deciding for marriage.

> *Sohan: Normally if it's an introduction probably within a year you'll be married and you probably won't live together . and […] I don't know how well you can know somebody within you know, in that sort of time.*
>
> *KT: Do you think it's better to live with somebody before you marry them?*
>
> *S: Oh, I think it is, yeah.* **Sohan (M), UK**

As explained in the last chapter, informants expressed a preference for a relationship to 'evolve', each step occurring naturally after the other. In an introduced marriage, informants felt they were working to someone else's timetable.

Then even as young Gujaratis in the UK have negotiated an 'introduced marriage' – a new form of marriage which seems to have plenty of choice and time for the couple to progress in their relationship – by many it is still considered an unattractive option. Primarily this seems to be because it jolts with the romantic narrative that most of my informants subscribed to; relationships should just evolve, traditional criteria should be ignored and the main motive for marriage should be love. Thus many informants preferred a love marriage, but as we shall see, this means something quite different than a love marriage in India; it is a love marriage negotiated with parents.

## *9.2 Love marriage in the UK*

Due to the factors described above and the ideologies of love 'evolving' outlined in Chapter Seven, there was a strong preference for a love marriage in the UK. But unlike in India, in the UK a love marriage does not necessarily mean a couple who has broken apart from the family; rather the emphasis is on who initiates the courtship process. As Sohan explains:

*I would define it [love marriage] as whether you met yourselves and decided to get married. Love marriage as you met yourselves and decided to get married of your own accord. […] But I just think it's a better way of .. the way we've been brought up and the culture we actually live in rather than where we're from .. and you have to know somebody well and know that they're the right person for you to marry them because these days it's very easy to get divorced. It's not kind of frowned upon or it's not … you know before in Indian communities it just wasn't done whereas now it is done and it's you know we're a lot more westernised than our parents were so you probably need to get together in a bit more of a westernised way as well.* **Sohan (M), UK**

According to Sohan a love marriage is of the *"culture we live in"*. As with other informants, the suggestion is that a love marriage will be healthier, more intimate and less likely to end in divorce. The implication is perhaps that previous generations stuck with a marriage regardless of their feelings towards their spouse, but that now young British Asians have higher expectations of their marriage and therefore need to meet someone in the *"*western*ized way"* ensuring that they are in love before marriage.

As explained previously, all of my married UK-based informants described their marriages as love marriages, having met one another without any participation from their families. Their relationship stories were similar to my own and my friends' relationship stories; they described meeting in bars or through common friends, gradually getting to know one another on dates and eventually moving in together before a marriage proposal. But while informants appeared to prefer a love marriage similar to any other British person, many parents have different criteria of what makes a good match. Their more 'traditional' considerations clashed with the romantic stories that young people created around their relationships, and thus informants negotiated the limits of a love marriage with their parents – as Darsha and Pretak's story makes clear.

**Darsha and Pretak: A love marriage**

Darsha and Pretak met one another when they were studying for their A-levels in Leicester. They dated briefly while they were still in school but Darsha broke off the relationship saying she was concerned with her studies. Nevertheless she often thought about Pretak after the break-up; she says he was *"devastatingly handsome"* and she wondered wistfully if he was *"the one that got away".* Five years later, when they had both finished university and were living in London, they met one another and started dating again. Eventually they moved in together and last year Pretak proposed to Darsha. He told me:

*There was something holding me there with Darsha. I don't know what it is, but there is something there that is keeping me together with her and, you know, I guess that's just the*

*love and it doesn't . we have tested it. […] You know, there is nothing going to stop us from being with each other.*

Both Pretak and Darsha feel it was important that they lived together before deciding for marriage. As Pretak says they have *"tested"* the love.

Despite living together for over a year, at the time of their engagement Darsha's parents had no knowledge of their relationship. She said *"the decision of being married would have been forced upon us as opposed to it being our decision."* Just as in an introduced marriage, informants in a love marriage feel that their parents put a time limit on the relationship. The difference here is that Darsha and Pretak were able to keep the relationship secret. But even though the relationship had been a secret from her parents for three years, Darsha was eager to get their approval of her chosen fiancé:

*D: I think probably when Pretak met my parents at Christmas, my Mom and she smiled, and just gave her approval. There must be something, I don't know, that you grew up with that's innate but when your Mom gives an approval or maybe it was just me, it made me accept Pretak more. It made me think --*

*P: Really?!*

*D: Yeah, obviously. Pretak and I haven't talked about this, it made me think "definitely this is my husband, I have made the right choice" because if sounds silly but when – until my Mom gives her sort of approval I /probably*

*P: /I guess you know, you are right because when Mom met you for the first time, you know, Mom and [sister], their approval was important.*

Pretak seems to also feel that family approval is important. But significantly, above he says that "*there is nothing going to stop"* their relationship. They seek approval, not permission from their parents. Their relationship to one another takes precedence.

Darsha is surprised, however, that her parents have some qualms about Pretak as a suitable match. Pretak comes from the Mochi caste, which is part of the low Sudra caste group. Darsha's family come from the Vaishya group of castes, just above the Sudra group but part of the 'twice born' group of *varnas*. Darsha describes negotiating with her mother about the relative importance of caste, and about the fact that Pretak's parents were divorced. In the end, it came down to Darsha's father, who Darsha describes as the 'head of the household'. He told her *"at least he's not a Muslim"* and thus permission was granted. One year later, Darsha and Pretak were married.

### 9.2.1 Secret courtships in love marriage

As with Darsha and Pretak, many informants conducted their relationships in secret. They explained that parents expect a much shorter courtship period and prefer their son or daughter to make a decision for marriage sooner than informants would like to. Going out with someone from the same caste paradoxically puts more pressure on couples, as parents' expectations (and hopes) rise:

> *I think that's one of the problems with this whole marrying . eh, parents want you to get married to the same, person of the same . cultural background, part of India, is that whenever you meet someone who is of that same background, there is an almost semi-automatic expectation of […] shall I marry the person or not . "Oh god," and that's never a good way, doesn't help personally. I don't think.* **Nihal (M), UK**

As with introductions described above, the expectation of marriage is felt to impede the natural progression of the relationship. For this reason informants often prefer to keep the relationship secret until the couple are certain they want to marry. The decision to marry is made exclusively between the couple, usually culminating in a traditional western proposal unheard of in India; the man going down on one knee, offering her an engagement ring, and so on. Only after the engagement family were informed. It's difficult to say with such a small sample, but my impression is that girls are under more pressure to marry and therefore are more likely to keep their relationships secret from their parents. Nonetheless, Darsha's parents did not seem to mind that she had kept the relationship secret from them and in fact her mother laughingly teased her about it. This suggests that the relationship was not wholly a surprise and that some parents perhaps expect relationships to be kept secret from them.

The second 'secret', as we saw with Darsha and Pretak, is about the co-habiting status of a couple. Since many informants feel that to 'really know' their partner, they should live together before deciding for marriage, they 'hide' this aspect from their parents who prefer marriage before co-habiting. But as above, there was a sense that some parents knew their son or daughter was living with a partner before marriage, but preferred it to be kept secret from them. In this way, parents could feel comfortable that the live-in relationship was secret from their peers, who may judge parents badly for having a son or daughter in a co-habiting relationship. Some families seemed to operate on a "*don't ask don't tell"* basis, as Darsha suggests. Raj (2003) had similar findings amongst her first and second generation middle class Indian interviewees; she found that some parents knew that their son or daughter was co-habiting with a partner but actively lied to their peers telling them their son or daughter had an arranged marriage.

### 9.2.2 Negotiating suitability with parents

As we saw with Darsha and Pretak, some parents are concerned about the caste of their offspring's partner. But in all the examples I came across of inter-caste couples, the couple convinced their parents of the unimportance of this criterion. Many people told me that the importance of caste endogamy is disappearing in the UK. As Yogesh describes, it's *"an extra tick"*, but not necessary:

> *KT: Your parents don't have a preference [for caste]?*
>
> *Y: Not really, I mean it's kind of eh, an extra tick in the box [Laughs] and nothing more, it really isn't! It's like you know, it means that okay, you are kind of bit more guaranteed that their customs are exactly the same but em, and I think a lot of these sort of fear if you like, I guess that might exist, I don't know if it does but I would imagine, they want to keep it in caste because they don't want to sort of have to deal with all these different customs and traditions or whatever, but to be honest I would say, a lot of this is very similar now anyway so, I don't think it matters too much.* **Yogesh (M), UK**

This was also borne out in the speed dating events I attended. Attendees were concerned to meet someone of the right 'community' (i.e. Gujarati as opposed to Punjabi) but were ambivalent about caste. Some professed to not even know their caste.

Still, one or two parents having never expressed a preference for caste previously were nonetheless disappointed with the low caste status of their future daughter or son-in-law. Darsha, for example, expressed her surprise at her parents' concern for her husband's caste, telling me they had never discussed caste with her previous to this. But Naveen, whose family belongs to the Sudra caste, felt that some Gujarati women were put off because of his low caste status. It seems that, as in India, most parents have a pool of acceptable castes within which they prefer their daughter or son to marry. There appears to be more flexibility in the UK since, from my experience, it's unlikely that parents in India would allow a marriage between a 'twice born' and non-'twice born' person (such as in the case of Darsha and Pretak).

But even as caste appears to be decreasing in importance, there are other limitations on who is an appropriate person to marry; cross community (e.g. a Gujarati marrying a Punjabi), cross race and, as we saw with Darsha's dad, most especially Hindu-Muslim marriages are disapproved of. For example Rama's parents, who she tells me are so 'modern' that they don't mind if she marries an English[126] person, are against her marrying a Muslim man:

> *KT: And how would your parents feel if they know you are seeing someone English?*
>
> *R: There is no, they wouldn't mind, I mean we have got English people in our family like my cousins married an English family, aunt married an English family and yeah, my folks*

[126] My informants used 'English' to refer to white English people. They referred to themselves as 'British Asians'.

*really got modern and stuff and they had been like here, I mean my mom has often said to me I don't mind you marrying - but don't convert to being a Muslim, that's the – that's the only criteria.* **Rama (F), UK**

Other informants too told me that their parents didn't mind an English spouse, though they preferred an Indian. There seems to be a hierarchy of community and race acceptable to parents.

### 9.2.3 Young people's preference for a suitable boy/girl

But some young people also expressed their own concern over particular 'traditional' criteria of their potential partner. This was normally 'apologised' for in the interview as informants recognised it broke with the romantic discourse within which they told their relationship stories. Prity, for example, speaks disdainfully of those who choose a partner that 'ticks all the boxes' but she too tells me that she will marry an Indian because her brother married a white English woman. She spends considerable time in the interview rationalizing her choice:

*The reason I say that I wouldn't be with a non-Indian now is partially because my parents have a lot of expectations on me, I am the only daughter. I am the youngest and my parents are getting old. Their health is very, very fragile. They have been through a lot coming to terms with my brother marrying an English girl. And um, and they just have a lot of hope on me.* **Prity (F), UK**

Her decision to marry an Indian then is justified by her parents' ill-health and her brother's marriage. But Prity tells me that she too was upset that her brother married a non-Indian because the role of the daughter-in-law is so special, and the English woman he married was unable to fill that role. Likewise, during an interview with Darsha and Pretak, Darsha told me that she wouldn't marry a Muslim man since her parents would be against the marriage, but Pretak's incredulous response stopped her short. She then went on to say *"I would have just defied my parents and married him anyway."* This suggests that there is both a desire to marry someone acceptable to parents, and that young people have similar preferences or priorities to their parents.

As discussed in Chapter Seven, the overwhelming discourse amongst UK informants is that love should be the primary deciding factor in marrying someone, not ethnic or class background. But preferences for ethnic, educational, and occupational background often snuck in. Such material or traditional criteria when choosing a spouse could be understood as a reaction to the dominant discourse around Asians and Indians in Britain. Informants may be trying to maintain their status as 'model minority'[127] by choosing a partner of a similar class background. And choose someone from the same community or ethnic background due to a feeling of unacceptance from

[127] 'Model minority' is a term originated in the US to describe the relative academic and occupational success of some ethnic groups over others. It is a contested term due to some conflicting evidence which shows that although there is high achievement amongst these 'model minority' groups there is also a disproportionate number 'underachieving' – see for example Yang's discussion (2004) on South East Asian American youths.

mainstream British society. But at any rate, informants seemed to want to hide these criteria for a spouse and downplayed them during interviews.

Dating websites and speed dating events seem to tap into this ambiguity of wanting someone of the same background, while also preferring to prioritise love in choosing a spouse.[128] Such websites allow participants to discreetly choose these more 'traditional' or 'material' characteristics as well as more 'acceptable' personality traits (see Appendix E for an example of a UK-based Asian dating website form). A London-based matchmaker I met told me that his clients seek both details of salary, education and so on, and information on pastimes and character qualities. But the attendees at his events were far more embarrassed then those I met at other speed dating events. While speed dating event participants could later look up the profile of the person they are interested in on the Internet, in the matchmaking event, each person's badge stated their marital status, age, education, and occupation. Such badges seemed logical to the older generation, such as the matchmaker himself, but the overt display of these 'superficial' criteria jarred with the participants' romantic ideals. Romantic ideologies of love preclude any association with crude material or economic concerns (Illouz 1997). But in addition, the presence of family members at matchmaking events appeared to cause extreme embarrassment on the part of many of those present. Participation of family suggested 'interference' and appeared to be associated more with 'arranged marriage' traditions than with speed dating events of the white majority.

## *9.3 Choice and agency*

> *We . were venturing out on our own boat, doing our own thing but mindful of the fact of being good Indian kids .. not just saying you know we don't care we're just going to off to Vegas or something. We were trying to row our own boat but . doing what our parents wanted us to do.* **Mahendra (M), UK**

Mahendra's quote illustrates how my UK-based informants attempted to create relationships which were agreeable both to their own ideals of love, and their parents' ideals of an appropriate Indian marriage. Many informants' preferences for a suitable match appeared to be in line with those of their parents and therefore few problems arose. In the following section however, I describe the story of a Hindu-Muslim couple which highlights what happens when the preferences of the individual and the family are antithetical. Although this is an extreme case, it throws light on

[128] This appears to be the case in other non-Asian Internet dating websites too - see research on dating agency users in the US and Israel by Eva Illouz (2007). She found that the 'rational' approach inherent in Internet dating clashed with users' ideologies of romantic love.

the issue of choice and agency for young people in the UK and how the situation in the UK contrasts with that in India.

*Ameera and Mahendra*

Ameera and Mahendra told me they met in university while 'hanging out' with a large group of British Indians, to whom they are still close. They felt immediately drawn to one another and spent everyday and evening together. Here Ameera describes her feelings during this period:

> *I certainly was very reluctant to get into a relationship with Mahendra because I just thought that, you know, about my family background and how much they've done for my sister and I in terms of our . getting us educated. You know working so hard to get us through private school and sacrifices Mum and Dad made. So I very much felt that I couldn't do that to my Mum and Dad.* **Ameera (F), UK**

Nonetheless, they eventually did get together, but Ameera says that as much as she loved Mahendra, she felt that in the future she would marry someone else, someone her parents would approve of.

But the relationship between Ameera and Mahendra intensified as they spent all of their undergraduate years secretly together. Then, when Ameera finished her degree, her parents began to introduce her to potential spouses:

> *Ameera: All and sundry would start coming through my door to come and meet me which was awful, really, really awful. And each time I told them that and I hated it Katherine, absolutely hated it. I felt like a piece of meat.*

Despite going through the motions with some suitors, Ameera eventually convinced her parents to call off the introduction process, using her continued medical training as an excuse. At the same time, she and Mahendra made a secret commitment to marry one another but were firm that they wanted their parents also on board. (What in India might be described as a 'love-arranged marriage'.)

Two years later Ameera's family was once again anxious to arrange a spouse for her, as were Mahendra's parents for him. Realising they could delay their parents no longer, they told them about their relationship. Their parents were shocked and upset and tried to convince them to give up the relationship. Wider family also got involved, each setting out the disadvantages of marrying someone of a different religion, but Ameera and Mahendra were resolute. They met repeatedly with their parents, *"trying to build ties"* with one another's parents and to *"bring them on board"*. Eventually Ameera's parents stopped speaking to her. This point in the story is described as a crucial turning point, in particular for Ameera. She describes coming to a realisation that her needs and those of her family were not necessarily the same. In particular a

counsellor she and Mahendra were visiting advised them to stop prioritising their families and to start *"rowing their own boat"*.

> *Mahendra: We looked around us and thought . this is kind of what it's all about .. the two of us, this house, our relationship, our friends, … and that's it. […] Stripping out all of the crap that has been a part of our relationship for four years or so, of expectations, of putting other people first, of forgetting why it was that we were going down that path in the first place and just putting, me making Ameera my priority and Ameera making me her priority.*
>
> **Mahendra (M), UK**

They finally got married without their parents' consent or attendance.

From Ameera and Mahendra's point of view, their parents were caught up in traditional Indian ideologies of what makes a good marriage. Ameera and Mahendra were angry with their parents, feeling they should prioritise the happiness of their son and daughter rather than hold on to 'old' prejudices and 'traditional' ideas of what makes a good marriage. Ameera felt that it is the context of the UK that has allowed her and Mahendra to separate out what is best for them from what is best for their families:

> *And it is that stereotype of being torn between cultures and being torn between expectations and what you know what you desire and what other people want of you, all of those things. Being second generation in this country, Asian, the race is understanding that look sometimes your family just cannot be the ones who help you in this - they are sometimes the ones who are causing the aggravation.* **Ameera (F), UK**

Ameera feels that had she been brought up in India, she would have eventually married whomever her parents chose. Being second generation, she says, has given her a critical awareness of what is best for her, which may not be what her parents and family want. She also seems to see her story as one unique to Asians in Britain. While I question whether only Asians experience parental pressure to marry someone 'suitable',[129] it is possible that other young people would be less tolerant of their parents' participation in their marriage choices.

Now, one year later, Ameera has re-established contact with her family but the relationship has changed. Her parents want her to resume the role of the *"dutiful daughter"*, but she *"refuses to jump just because they say so."* Ameera and Mahendra clearly structure their story as one of love triumphing over tradition, and of learning to prioritise their own happiness over that of their families. Effectively in this story it appears that Ameera and Mahendra move from a more kin-based understanding of their relationship to a more individualised understanding. At first, the family were a central part of their relationship but by the end they have learnt to *"cut out all the crap"* (Mahendra) and focus on one another.

[129] Evidence from the 1950s and 1980s shows that Americans too experience pressure from parents to marry someone of a similar background and that Americans overwhelmingly marry like with like (see: Goode 1959, 1982).

Informants in India viewed individualism as a danger of living abroad, what they would term as a 'breakdown of the family'. Over there, informants told me that they would ultimately do what their parents wanted. For example, Seeta and Ajay have been together for three years, including one year living together. Still they are prepared to break up and marry someone of their parents' choosing. They feel that to prioritise themselves over their family would be wrong. This is a fundamental difference; the family in India has the *right* to exert its influence over the son or daughter's marriage. Think back to Anita who has a relationship before marriage which her parents discover. Although the relationship was platonic, she appears to agree with her parents that she has done something wrong. She feels her parents know better than her and soon after she goes along with a marriage they arrange.

I am not denying that love marriages happen in India, just as they do here in the UK, but in India, it is generally accepted that it is 'wrong' and parents are 'right' to throw out their son or daughter from the home. Those couples in India who do follow a love marriage justify it through recourse to traditional criteria, such as highlighting the similarities in family values, or portraying it as 'true love', as described in Chapter Six. Lena and Puneet, for example (as discussed in Chapter Eight), continue to maintain close contact with Puneet's parents despite their attempts to convince Puneet to divorce Lena. At no point does Lena try to tell me that Puneet's parents were 'wrong', nor does she ultimately prefer to define her marriage as central – in fact she spends a large part of her interviews convincing me of the 'family' aspect of her marriage. In the UK informants grow to resent parents' insistence of their priorities over those of the couple, and friends and siblings support the love marriage decisions of their peers. Ameera and Mahendra received overwhelming support from friends and colleagues as well as from siblings who also believe in the moral claim of the couple over that of the family. Not so in India. Such a controversial love marriage (between a Hindu and a Muslim) would most likely result in social ostracism and possibly the dissolution of the marriage. Mody's study (2008) on love marriage in India showed that while the law in theory protects love marriage couples, in reality the courts privilege family and community concerns and often annul the marriages that couples have formed without the permission of their parents.

The context in which Ameera and Mahendra live facilitates their 'love marriage'. The anonymity of the UK, the ability to travel away from their community and to even live together without their parents' knowledge, also facilitates relationships which are controversial and unaccepted in India. Finally, Ameera and Mahendra have the financial independence and security few young couples in India possess. These differences help to explain how and why courtship and marriage practices are different in Baroda and London. While UK-based informants want to negotiate with

and create marriages that are agreeable to their wider family, ultimately they have the upper hand. Parents can do little if their son or daughter chooses a spouse not to their liking. Furthermore, the repercussion for parents and their siblings appears to be less severe than in India, and is likely to be even less so for those who live and socialise in more ethnically mixed circles. Thus some parents care less about, in particular, marriages that break caste boundaries. In India the social consequences of a love marriage are severe and put additional pressure on parents to police the marriage choices of their children.

### *Conclusion*

In the UK informants aspire to marriages based on ideals of romantic love and companionate marriage. A new form of arranged marriage – 'introduced marriage' – has emerged which has far less parent involvement and allows young couples to court before deciding for marriage. But even as introduced marriage is compared to online dating practices of the white majority, many informants see this kind of marriage as 'old fashioned' and a 'last resort'. Primarily this is due to the participation of family and because the introductions process clashes with ideals of spontaneous value-free love. Love marriage is preferred, ideally with a person parents and family will appreciate and accept. Since many informants in the UK appeared to have similar ideas on what constitutes a good match, there were few reports of discordance. The context of the UK also facilitates love marriage; the anonymity and financial independence of young people in the UK allows young couples to court without being watched over by their elders. But there is also some evidence of a tacit acquiescence from parents for premarital relationships and 'love marriages'. However, even in those situations where young people choose someone of whom their parents disapprove, there appears to be little parents can do. In the UK young people feel that the moral claim lies with the couple, not with the family.

# Chapter Ten: The making and unmaking of an egalitarian marriage in Baroda, India

In private conversations Seeta told me about her dreams of becoming a successful businesswoman and how her ideal husband would *"do his own work and let me do mine."* Around her partner Ajay she demurely and rather ambiguously spoke of looking after the home and children in some distant future when they got married. Ajay, for his part, told me that he was *"forcing"* Seeta to work as he wanted her to be independent, to stand on her own two feet, and to not have to rely on anyone else, even him. While explaining this he frequently referred to couples in the US and UK living and working together and even used my partner and me as an example of conjugal equality and happiness. Seeta told me about how when they lived together in England, Ajay had wanted to share all the housework with her but she had preferred to do it for him. Now that they were in this flat in Baroda, I noticed that she did all the cooking, cleaning, and serving, and Ajay made no attempt to help her.

It seemed that Seeta found it difficult to *not* cook and clean for Ajay, which she had always been told was the appropriate behaviour for a woman. She told me that since she was very young her mother had encouraged her to learn to cook for her future husband and for some years she had been doing all the cooking at home to *"get some practice"*. Nonetheless, she and Ajay guffawed at a *"backward"* Indian suitor in America who had told Seeta that she needn't work in the US, just make sure she knew how to cook good Gujarati food. Such ambiguities and contradictions are at the heart of this chapter. I explore to what degree an emphasis on marriages of love and a spouse chosen by the couple have impacted on gender roles and ideologies. I do this by drawing on Connell's framework of gender relations (1987), exploring to what extent equality between the sexes appears to be a goal, and whether and how it has been achieved (or why not).

## *10.1 Ideals of Equality*

In this first section I describe women's and men's views on equality separately, since they appear to differ quite significantly.

### 10.1.1 Women's ideals of equality

> *KT: How do you think, when you say you wanted to be treated equally* [by your husband] *in what ways you want to be treated equally?*
> *Rekha: Treated equally in matter of freedom, education, in matter of .. in every way you know there is now… it's become like men and women go together, not according to olden*

*Indian custom where women were just living into the house into four walls and men go outside and explore and now it has become even women go out and do work and so I feel all the responsibilities should be shared by both of them equally whether it is earning your bread, taking care of children or running your house.* **Rekha (F), India**

*[Future ideal husband] must respect my parents and give me freedom, not treat me as a wife, he must treat me as a friend, as a partner. Partner means share, 50-50 everything so he should treat me as a partner, so not 'you just stay in the home, I will work' - even I want to work, after marriage also!* **Female Focus Group Participant, India**

The women I met in Baroda expressed to me their hopes of working outside the home and contributing to the finances of the house, as their partner would contribute to the household work. Those women most vociferous about their desire for equality and respect tended to be unmarried; they were determined to find a partner who would treat them as an equal. Equality was generally understood in terms of the right to work outside the home, and a man's participation in housework.[130]

There was much discussion on how to find a 'broadminded' man and negotiate a marriage with more equal relations, as the following conversation illustrates. This extract was recorded during the marriage course I attended; it took place between the teacher (T) and her students (S). The students had just been describing the kind of husband they would like to marry – someone with a better education, slightly older and with good earning prospects.

*T: Is there equality in the marriage then?*

*[Silence]*

*T: Do you expect equality?*

*[Silence]*

*S1: It is difficult to get Mam.*

*S2: Maybe the girl is good-looking, if he has such education and good background then that will give her status?*

*S3: Already the woman is inferior in India and if he has more education and money he will feel more superior.*

*T: Will this imbalance help the marriage to last long?*

*S4: Women are used to this, it is the norm*

*S5: Or if you are educated you can try to find someone who will allow an equitable relationship.*

[130] Note: I did not ask directly about 'equality', rather I asked about an 'ideal spouse' and important attributes of a 'successful marriage'. I also had a list of possible 'traits' for a future spouse, one of which was 'broadminded' (see Appendix C). It was within these conversations that desires for and notions of 'equality' and 'respect' arose.

A woman with more education was deemed to have more 'status' and therefore more negotiating power with her husband and new family. But at the same time we can see in this extract a certain fatalistic attitude; *"women are used to this, it is the norm."* Despite education and beauty, women felt they would have little bargaining power in their new homes. As such they sought to marry an educated man who they thought would be more likely to have an egalitarian attitude. Less educated, rural, and lower caste men were stereotyped as sexist and 'backward'.

Informants made assumptions about the kind of egalitarian relationship I share with my partner and reflected on how in the US and UK couples, including 'Non Resident Indian'[131] couples, share work and household chores equally. Women in particular voiced this opinion when I asked them about their impressions of life in the UK, which they gathered from friends or relations living abroad, and television or movies. Some longed to move to the UK or US where they felt they would be freer:

> *Here if the girl has a good talent hidden inside her, she won't feel as free here in India, but there [UK] she can show her talent and she can show the things hidden inside her, very freely.* **Priya (F), India**

This, coupled with living separate from joint families, was thought to be the biggest difference between life in the UK and India.

Married women or those in relationships, such as Seeta, also spoke of their desire for 'freedom' and equality but they tended to be less adamant than unmarried women. It appeared that women find it difficult to not take on traditional female roles once they are married. Seeta for example had been brought up by her mother to believe that she should look after her future husband through cooking for him and taking care of the house. As Osella and Osella (2006) observed, a woman serving her husband has long been seen as an act of love and nurturance, and may even be understood erotically. Then cooking skills are seen as a kind of preparation for marriage, as seen in this discussion during the marriage course between a teacher (T) and students (S):

> *T: What kind of preparation is there before marriage?*
> *S1: Financial?*
> *S2: Mental adjustment to new family, mentally prepare yourself.*
> *S3: Like, if the new family get up early, you should start getting up early before you get married so that you can get used to it.*
> *T: Yes, you can't laze around like you used to do in your new house!*
> *S4: Learning to cook?*
> *S5: But you have been doing some of these preparations all your life – such as cooking.*
> *T: Yes, that is true. How many of you will learn to cook for your marriage preparation?*

[131] 'Non Resident Indian' refers to those of Indian descent who live abroad, both first and second generation.

*All S: Yes!*

Female informants going through arranged marriage interviews also told me that they were frequently asked by their future parents-in-law about their ability to cook.

Further to that Seeta told me she *enjoyed* the feeling that she was taking care of Ajay, even as she and Ajay mocked the American suitor who wanted Seeta to make Gujarati food for him in the US. Such ambiguities arose quite frequently with my informants. Lena for example told me that she was determined to be an independent woman, known by her own name and not that of her husband or father, but added:

> *I am sort of a person who gets very much depressed when my husband enters the house and I am not there – what he feels? He needs to have a glass of water, he, will he be hungry or will he need some tea? Like, if he is in when I am out then it is bad on my part.*

Lena's feelings of guilt and Seeta's inability to stop herself from looking after Ajay, point to inherent conflicting models of appropriate behaviour for a woman.

### 10.1.2 Men's views on equality

Men's views on equality and gender roles were equally if not more ambiguous than women's. On the one hand, they spoke enthusiastically about the importance of a 'modern' outlook and disparagingly of 'backward' sexist men from rural areas and lower castes. On the other, they lamented 'women's rights' and worried about the demise of 'Indian family values'. Aditya, for example, links women's 'freedom' in the US and UK with over-individualisation and a loss of family connectedness. He complains that even in India women are no longer willing to make the sacrifices that his mother did and sorrowfully tells me there is *"no holding back women"* in India. He feels this reflects a more selfish age; women are less concerned about their families and more concerned with their own development. This, he argues, results in marriages that are more insecure.

In general then men described their ideal wife as a woman who was both 'broadminded' and 'traditional'. For example, in terms of working outside the home, men say they would prefer to marry a working woman who has 'knowledge' of the world beyond the home, but her priority should be the family and the house:

> *She can work part time, I will work full time that's obvious. She can work for part time and then again for the house… I am not even telling that she should work. But she should be . well graduated. Well graduated with good marks and she should be at least a graduate person, if in the future there is need to work, then she can work.* **Durish (M), India**

We can see that Durish is hesitant to define exactly whether his wife should work or not. It seems from this and other comments he made that he prefers a woman who *could* work and who has

other interests and knowledge beyond the house, but who will prioritise the house and only work in order to contribute to the house if necessary. Similar sentiments were expressed by other men; the ultimate priority of a woman should be the family.

Some men told me they were against women working because it meant that they would spend very little time together as husband and wife:

> *Cause I will tell you, when . you have some problem, with your marriage or something, or the guy does, when both are working, when both of your are working and unfortunately you have different shifts you don't really, get time to sit with each other and sit and sort the matter . this is what again leads to, you know divorce and broken marriages.* **Toni (M), India**

Toni later retracts this, saying that he doesn't mind if his (future) wife works, as long as she makes sure to be home every lunchtime and early enough to prepare the dinner. It is clearly seen as a man's role to financially support the family and a woman's role to care for it. Men considered it a bonus if their (future) wife could contribute to the house in times of need, but generally spoke of their wife's work as a 'time pass' to keep her occupied during the day or before having kids.

A further reason men that sought an educated woman or working woman was that she would be an asset in educating their future children.[132] As Nilesh explains:

> *I wanted to have my life partner as a working woman because if she is working outside so she will know how to operate outside, outside the four walls of the house, so she is practically involved in the work process, so she knows, how to* [unclear], *what I mean by that is, whenever she gives birth to someone or she has a child, she will properly take care of the development of the child, cause being a working woman she knows how it operates outside. So being that way, she can teach outside, how to go about in the world. .. That's why I wanted to have my life partner as a working woman.* **Nilesh (M), India[133]**

Yet again she is associated with care for the family. Thus on the one hand, women's emancipation and freedom is associated with progressive modern ideals, and on the other hand, a stay at home wife signifies a man with sufficient salary to maintain his family, and a wife who prioritizes family over personal concerns.

## *10.2 Gender roles and equality: ideals to experience*

In looking at gender relations, Connell (1987) suggests that we examine cathexis, labour, and

[132] I suspect women's educational attainment and work experience are also a symbol of class and 'progressive' ideals.
[133] Nilesh and his wife Jambli told me they have a 'love marriage'. Here he talks about his more 'practical' reasons for wanting to marry Jambli, but at other times he painted a very 'romantic' picture of their relationship. This highlights again the integration of both affect and so-called 'traditional' criteria for informants, even in a 'love' marriage.

power. In this section I interrogate each of these areas in order to explore to what extent a more 'companionate' marriage has been realised amongst my informants in Baroda.

### 10.2.1 Cathexis

The first aspect is cathexis; expectations of feelings, emotions and sexuality in the relationship. Both men and women value 'understanding' and emotional support between a couple. Men, as much as women, told me stories which portrayed their relationship as one of love and affection, although as discussed in Chapter Six women appeared to be more attached to a companionate ideal of marriage than men. Nonetheless, both men and women had expectations of affection and intimacy from one another. In terms of sexuality, there was less equivalence. As discussed in Chapter Two, there is a long history of double sexual standards for men and women. This is particularly the case in terms of premarital sexuality; it is considered imperative by all my informants in India that a woman (more than a man) should be a virgin until marriage.

The importance of women's virginity can be traced back to the Hindu definition of marriage as the 'gifting of a virgin' from the daughter's parents to the son's family.[134] The young people I met refuted 'old fashioned' ideas of 'gifting a virgin', but they still value women's virginity before marriage. Here Durish (M) tries to explain why:

> *Because, it's again, you know in India, especially in my family that eh, you, always need to marry a girl who is pure, so if a girl is a virgin she is pure and it's like if you marry to one girl and after marriage she tells you that I was not a virgin you feel like a second or third hand person, that feeling is not, you know, good. You always think about okay, with whom did she have it before, who was that guy, you try to find out more about that guy and your life will go in just thinking about that guy and, then, just always when you have small fights you will tell okay you like that guy and all, you know this thinking is very common over here and I have faced this problem before and I had a girlfriend and . she had a boyfriend previously and I asked a lot of questions about this previous boyfriend, whenever she used to go and meet I used to 'okay, you are going to meet that guy I know!'*

Durish calls on family and Indian tradition to explain the importance of the bride being a virgin, but ultimately he suggests that a girl's previous sexual experience will make a man jealous. Other informants suggested that a girl who had sex before marriage would be untrustworthy, as Hiren says *"then after marriage she can offer to anybody else also. Right?"* The suggestion being that a woman who cannot control herself sexually before marriage will not be able to do so after marriage either.

[134] Dell (2005:194) argues that notions of female chastity actually emerged during the British colonial period; under British colonial rule, the ideal middle class Indian woman emerged as one which showed sexual restraint, untainted by the sexualising colonisers and in opposition to the proletariat prostitutes whose services were procured by the British.

When questioned both male and female informants claimed that a man's virginity is just as important as a woman's virginity, but men ranked the virginity of a future spouse much higher than women did.[135] When I questioned women on why they placed virginity so far down their list after telling me they thought it was very important, women defended their ranking by saying that it is impossible to really know whether a man is a virgin or not. For them, other factors such as education and 'family background' should guard against men's previous sexual promiscuity. Male informants also told me that the virginity of a man was just as important as the virginity of a woman but all their explanations around virginity centred on the idea of 'purity' in women. Durish, for example, after telling me that a man's virginity is just as important as a woman's, eventually admitted that actually men cannot lose their virginity: *"Guys even masturbate [half laugh] but they do not lose their virginity by that way."*

Thus with a little probing informants generally admitted that there were some 'double standards' in the expectation of virginity before marriage. Aditya, for example, had been in sexual relationships before his arranged marriage to Geet. He told me that before being introduced to Geet he had worried that he would be unable to find a woman who could *"accept"* his past relationships. Indeed Geet reported that it was quite a shock when he told her about his previous relationships, but she said she trusted him when he told her that *"these ways"* were over. But Aditya told me that in the reverse situation (i.e., had it been Geet with the previous sexual experience), *"I am a male, being a male attitude I probably would not accept it."* So we can see that it is preferred if men do not have a relationship before marriage, in particular a sexual relationship, but it is forgivable when it does occur. Such behaviour in a woman is less likely to be accepted.

Even so, nearly all the men I interviewed claimed to be virgins and said that they wanted to remain so until marriage. Some used their virginity to justify their wish to marry a virgin woman. On the other hand other men, perhaps influenced by the fact that they were being interviewed by a woman, seemed to fluctuate between boasting about sexual or relationship experiences and emphasising their virginity status. In the following conversation Toni both implies and denies sexual activity:

*KT: Why do you prefer going out in the evenings?*

*Toni: Maybe, I feel like it's good, I mean you go out on a date in the evening and you can do much things in that, I mean, that way.*

*KT: Like what kind of things?*

*T: Everything! [Smiles]*

*KT: Like?*

[135] Informants were asked to rank in order of importance a list of potential spouse qualities, including virginity. See Appendix C for list and table of responses.

*T: Everything! [Laughs]*

*KT: What do you mean, like kissing and things like this?*

*T: Eh, maybe kissing is, you can even go further than that . /have sex*

*KT: /How?*

*T: have fun and all that /*

*KT: /Really? /*

*T: /I didn't do all that, I just, I am saying, but in the evening time is much better.*

*KT: And this would be in the cars?*

*T: Not in the cars, we have, we have, we have, a car is like . kind of . you can just make out, over there, but you can't go the whole way in the car, I mean, it's not even comfortable, it's so, vulgar types, I feel that you should have a good .. environment, you have to have a good room or something at least yes.* **Toni (M), India**

This ambiguity points to some conflicting models of behaviour for men. The danger is that such ambiguous pressure on men to be both sexually experienced and virginal might encourage them to hide sexual activity before marriage to their wives and therefore be less likely to disclose previous unsafe sex.

In contrast to the rather ambiguous understandings of male or female virginity, there was a strong emphasis on the importance of *mutual* pleasure and satisfaction in marital relationships. This emerged from a question I had originally posed about 'healthy sexuality' to elicit information about sexually transmitted infections (STIs), number of partners and other information pertinent to public health studies on sexuality. But what emerged as important for the informants was much more around reciprocal pleasure and emotional involvement. Primarily sex was understood as a means to demonstrate and build emotional ties, of which both partners should participate equally. Since sex is an expression of love, informants described sex as something loving, consensual, and satisfying for both:

*KT: Okay. And …. let me see … what do you think is a healthy sexuality, what do you think that means?*

*Geet: … Healthy sexuality is like both man is happy, no still I don't get your question. Can you repeat that?*

*KT: What do you think means a healthy sexuality?*

*G: .. Healthy sexuality is like … both are [7 seconds] both are happy in that bed.*

**Geet (F), India**

*Durish: A healthy sexuality, yeah like both of them are satisfied with each other and especially about sex life I think this the main. The guy satisfies the girl and if the girl*

*satisfies the guy, both love each other, both have successful sex both have orgasm I think that is healthy sex life, even sex is good for health.* **Durish (M), India**

A concern that both partners enjoy sex suggests notions of equality between two partners (Jamieson 1998).

This emphasis on mutual pleasure appears to contradict findings from previous sexuality studies in India which tend to assume a passive and unpleasurable sexual experience for Indian women (Chandiramani *et al.* 2002).[136] In my study, sexual satisfaction was described as a core element in maintaining a bond between a husband and wife and for that reason should be enjoyed by both.

*KT: And if a married couple are not getting on physically or in bed, then how will the rest of the their relationship fare?*

*Jambli: It won't work for a long time, the relationship won't work for a long time.*

*KT: Why do you think that?*

*J: Because marriage, one part, physical is one part of our life, not total part but one part, so everybody thinks that it is a part of a married life.* **Jambli (F), India**

In addition, women told me in interviews that they initiate sex 'all the time' and are happy to discuss with their husbands their likes and dislikes. Likewise men told me they were eager to have women initiate sex, as Nilesh explains here:

*KT: And what about women initiating sex, how do you feel about that?*

*[Pause]*

*Nilesh: Right and left, there should be something from their side as well because it should be an involvement from 50-50 both the sides, it shouldn't be like that only men are pushing it should be like the females are also . putting a step forward, just trying to take an initiative.* **Nilesh (M), India [Gujarati translated by interpreter]**

I don't want to over celebrate such findings on women's pleasure and participation in sex. As Foucault (1978) and others have pointed out, a supposedly 'freer' sexuality has its own set of expectations of how people will act and what they will feel. Being able to initiate sex may equally be experienced as oppressive, in the way that not being able to initiate sex can be. Still such discourses of mutual pleasure might also be liberating (and pleasurable) for women and perhaps signify some equity in 'cathexis'.

### 10.2.2 Labour

Labour refers to who does what kinds of work and whether there are expectations that men should properly do one kind of work and women another. This was definitely the case amongst my informants. As discussed above, while some women, particularly those that were unmarried,

[136] Note though that most of the studies cited in this review were not conducted with middle class women. Puri's study (1999) amongst middle class women in Bombay did find some evidence of pleasurable sexual experience.

described their desire to have a career and work outside the home, the men were looking to marry 'traditional' women who were ready to prioritise family and housework.

For women already married, there was some evidence that living within a joint family made it more difficult for them to take on a career role due to additional pressure from parents-in-law to take on the role of 'carer'. For example, Swati works full time but explained that she must prioritise the care of her in-laws and husband above her work. Unlike her husband, who has no role in the housework or care of his parents, she is constantly 'on call' to look after the family. As Swati explains, no one 'forces' her to take care of the house – the pressure is more subtle than that:

> *It's not compulsory also but if you do* [come home from work to look after parents-in-law] *they would appreciate also, they will only like that "okay fine she is taking care of us".* **Swati (F), India**

Swati knows that in order for her in-laws to have a good opinion of her she needs to take on the role of the dutiful daughter-in-law. Her position in a new family is weak. She must ensure that her new parents 'like her' and get on with her, and so she makes it clear to them that her priority is to take care of the house and family.[137] But equally her position as a working woman could 'hurt' Hiren's ego:

> *Swati: When the stage comes when either of us have to be at home then of course it would be me.*
>
> *KT: Why do you say of course . because in India?*
>
> *S: Yes maybe India only and maybe if guy sits at home than he will feel that his ego is being hurt and his wife is going out and working. Male ego comes in between which I think spoils family life and everything. So it's better if one understands.*

This sentiment was repeated by other women who told me that they would 'hide' their salary from their husband if they knew it was larger than his.

Other women I met wanted to live separately in a nuclear house in the hope that this would lead to a decreased burden of domestic work. Jambli and Nilesh were a married couple living with Nilesh's parents while saving up to buy their own home. Jambli told me that she wants to move out because her new family expects her to do too much housework:

> *I had not expected this, I do not like to cook and household work like cleaning the floor and sweeping etc, I like to decorate and interior design, but what I did not like, it came on my head you know, like to keep the place clean and do all the household work. So things were not the way exactly I wanted it.* **Jambli (F) India [Hindi translated by interpreter]**

[137] Men also referred to the reaction of their parents when explaining why they think a woman should not work after marriage. For example, Aditya told me his parents would be *"worried"* about Geet if she was out working when justifying his preference for her short work hours to me.

Women were aware that men usually prefer to live with their parents so in general women who want to live in a nuclear home told me they sought to marry a man whose family home is already full of married siblings, or a man who worked in a city other than where his parents lived. These women seemed unwilling to negotiate living separately directly with their (future) husband, but rather worked to find a potential husband who lived separately now. Like Jambli, these women felt that a nuclear house would mean less work and less demand for 'traditional' behaviour, such as wearing saris around the house or avoiding the kitchen during menstruation.[138] Similar findings were found amongst South Indian nurses in Kerala who hoped to have a more egalitarian marriage in a nuclear household after emigrating to a Gulf country (Percot 2006).

But there are advantages to living within a joint family setting. Some women I interviewed, while nervous, had preferred to live with a joint family, though one that would allow them to wear casual clothes and work part-time. Geet explained how she would be lonely if she didn't live with her in-laws since Aditya was in the office all day. She had moved from another city and had no friends or relatives other than Aditya's family. Living with the in-laws also meant that the couple had few or no bills to pay and could mean more sharing of housework between sisters-in-law and a mother-in-law. Meanwhile living in a nuclear household could potentially decrease women's access to help in childcare, making it more difficult for her to work outside of the home. Lena, for example, who lived alone with her husband, gave up her medical career which she felt was unsustainable with her role as a wife and (future) mother. Although she did not justify her choice by her household circumstances, it nonetheless shows that living in a nuclear house does not automatically result in a husband and wife sharing career and household responsibilities. Similar findings were found by Sheba George (2005) amongst Malayali migrant nurses in the US; George's informants described feelings of isolation living in a nuclear house, and continued stereotypic gender divisions; many of the women both worked full time as nurses and looked after the house and family.

I have explained the pressures on women to take on a 'traditional' and family/ home oriented role, but it is also true that there is pressure on men to fulfil the 'provider' role. Many women, for example, told me they would only marry a man with a sufficiently good education and salary. For example:

> *I am* [have an] *MSc, I'm a science field, but if I marry some boy, he must be in engineering or medical, so I want some higher education, boy who has* [been] *educated more than me.*
> **Muktha (F), India**

Other women told me that whoever they married must have a better education than 'BCom' (a bachelor's degree in Commerce), which was deemed of low value for future earning. As seen

[138] Though some women gleefully told me of watching their mother-in-law cooking when they were menstruating.

above, men equally see their role as one of the 'breadwinner'. Arguably with increased emphasis on economic wealth as a means to gain status, there is more pressure on men to earn a good salary. Since it is considered shameful for a man to profit from his wife's salary (Jeffery and Jeffery 2006), the family income rests primarily on his shoulders. Thus there are normative gender expectations to do with labour for and from both men and women.

### 10.2.3 Power

Finally, Connell suggested examining 'power'; who makes decisions and who has control of the financial resources. In my experience the balance of power appeared to rest with the man. A case in point is a man's decision over whether his wife will work or not. While men seemed to boast about their liberal attitude towards women, their language betrayed a paternalistic attitude and their superior power in making decisions. Here I ask Gunjan, a single man who was going through introductions, if the relationship he expected with his future wife would be similar to his parents' relationship:

> *Yeah, I think it will be similar. Maybe a small difference, cause of the generation gap. Like my father doesn't let my mother drink alcohol but I will let my wife drink, though not in front of the family! I will let my wife work, part time or she can work in the [family] shop also if she wants to. That's no problem.* **Gunjan (M), India**

Such language as 'letting' or 'allowing' a wife to work were common and rather took away from the self-labelled 'modern egalitarian' image of my male informants. I am conscious that men may have felt the need to position themselves as a powerful man while being interviewed by a woman. But two things convince me that men truly have the power to decide whether their wife works:

1) Many times the wife was present when her husband was talking about 'allowing' her to work, and women themselves told me how lucky they felt that she should be 'allowed' to work part-time.

2) More often than not men wanted to show me how 'broadminded' they were. In fact, many of them seemed to be proud of their liberal attitude in 'letting' their wife work. Thus it seems counter-intuitive that they were exaggerating their paternal attitude. The one cautionary element to this is that of course I conducted most interviews in English. But translated interviews too used language of 'permitting' and 'allowing'. Furthermore, Percot found similar findings amongst her informants in South India, citing women who were hoping that their husbands would 'allow' them to continue to work as a nurse after marriage (Percot 2006:47).

Men also considered themselves or their fathers as the 'head of the house' who is expected to make the chief household decisions around, for example, any large amounts of spending or investment. Men explained that women were consulted, but ultimately there must be one final decision maker and that should be the husband (or father-in-law). Here I asked Hiren about whether he and Swati discussed financial issues in their initial introduction meetings:

*KT: Yeah – and what about money? Did you talk about money ever, like how you would organize finances in the house? Did you talk about that kind of thing [with Swati]?*

*Hiren: In our family everything is under my father, he is the head of the family. Whatever I earn is just passed to him and he is arrange all the requirement, the savings, running of the financial planning and other things, all household decisions.* **Hiren (M), India**

However, some men also told me that if their father died, their mother would become the head of the house, underlining the changing status of women over the life course.

## *10.3 Gender equality?*

Notwithstanding the discourse around mutual sexual satisfaction and intimacy between a couple, there seemed to be a discrepancy between women's desire for egalitarian relationships and what appears to be unequal and paternalistic relationships with their husbands. Nonetheless, women portrayed themselves as happy and content with their relationships, even lauding the egalitarian natures of their husbands. While there is the possibility that some women are happy to take on a more traditional role, and are perhaps relieved to be free of the burden of paid work, this is unlikely to be the situation for all women.[139] Regardless of whether they want to pursue a career or not, this option is not open to them. Yet women elaborated on how 'broadminded' their husbands were and how they were 'free' to do as they pleased.

A case in point is Aditya and Geet. Aditya said he told Geet that she is not to work for the first four years of their marriage and then she can work part time:

*You can do your work, you can go out in Baroda if something is there if you need to go okay fine, you can go but then there are some time frame, in the morning we carry our tiffin*[140] *and we go 8.30-9.00 so before ten everything needs to be ready, my dad leaves at around 10.30 – 11.00 so he brings the tiffin with him so I said that you just see to it that you don't take up anything before 10.30 and before 6-6.30, between this you arrange your things.* **Aditya (M), India**

Here it appears that Aditya has dictated to Geet the exact terms of her work-home balance. He makes it clear to her that her priority must be the house. No such restrictions were put on his work, and nor does he make any attempt to prepare the tiffin for his father. While Geet was not present when Aditya told me the above, she was present when he previously told me that he would 'allow' her to work part time after their child was older. Geet, on the other hand, told me in her second interview that she was 'free' to do as she pleases:

*KT: And do you think your married life is the way you thought it would be like or different?*

[139] See (Jeffery 1979) for further elaboration on this point.
[140] Lunchbox

*Geet: Yeah 100% like […] First point that I can tell you is that Aditya is very open minded, very adjustable, he never interferes in my things, I can do whatever I want to do, so this all points are like easier for live with Aditya. And normal expectation is good husband, good family, I will have all the freedom to do whatever I want to do.* **Geet (F), India**

She told me that Aditya was very supportive of her work and her career aspirations and she looked forward to part-time work when their son was older. Such apparent contradictions were common amongst my married informants. How do we interpret this, given women's previous assertions of desiring 'equality' and 'respect'?

### 10.3.1 Impediments to a 'companionate marriage'

Above I described women's aspirations for relationships of equality and respect. I cited informants who told me they wanted to split housework *"50-50"* with their husbands (Female Focus Group participant) and to be respected *"for their own name and work"* (Lena). Yet using Connell's framework, we can see that there are continued gendered divisions of labour and power (and cathexis before marriage). Why were women painting their relationships to me as the happy egalitarian relationships they had always wished for? Three possible explanations come to mind:

i. Resistance is futile
ii. Women are grateful for the 'gift' of part time work
iii. 'Deep acting'

**i. Resistance is futile**

Indian notions of the family and the wider family's needs hinder women's attempts to create a more egalitarian marriage. Ongoing idealisation of the 'traditional Indian family' propagates women's role as within the home and for some 'women's rights' have become associated with individualisation and the decay of Indian values. Furthermore, as has been shown elsewhere, women's 'traditional' roles in the home are associated with an Indian upper and middle class background (see Caplan 1985). Donner has argued that from the beginning of the 19th century onward, a child centred discourse emerged from Europe making motherhood the most respectable role of women. This is a class-based ideal which is clearly not attainable to everyone. She argues that middle class women's lives have become increasingly "defined as service to the husband and their children, often in opposition to earlier and more collective ways of marriage and parenting" (Donner 2008:37). So the 'Indian family' discourse and the idea that the 'proper' place of women is in the home looking after children, has in fact strengthened amongst the middle classes in the last couple of centuries.

It seems then that modern and traditional ideals coexist in India, working to create a feminine self that is neither too much of one nor the other (Das 1994; Kielmann 2002). Das argues that inequalities within the family make it difficult for women to take hold of these modern identities

and so they stick to the ones which they can hold on to (the traditional ones) while still investing themselves in the stories of modern heroines portrayed in films and on television[141] (Das 1994). So while women may hold in their imagination more egalitarian relationships, they are unable to realise them. This is exacerbated by the low 'social capital' which newly married women have in their new home, often moving away from their home town and family (Jeffery and Jeffery 2006).

But Agarwal argues that women's failures to realise a more egalitarian relationship with their spouses should not be interpreted as an acceptance of their situations. Rather she proposes that an "overt appearance of compliance" is a "survival strategy" (Agarwal 1997:24) for women who lack economic power (such as an independent income) and social capital (such as kin networks after marriage migration) (see Jeffery and Jeffery 2006). Thus it seems that women in India simply do not have the resources to change their situations. While before marriage women may have some bargaining power, negotiating their desire to work after marriage for example, this is limited since it is well known that men want a 'traditional' woman, and women's reputation is more fragile (if she gets too many refusals from suitors she may compromise her ability to select a suitable boy). Thus from this point of view it would seem that women are making the best they can out of their situation, with little power to change it. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that all my unmarried informants were far more vigorous in their desire for an equal relationship with their husband than my married informants, who in contrast accept gendered divisions of labour and power in their marriages.

**ii. Women are grateful for the 'gift' of part time work**

A second way of understanding women's apparent complacency in the face of unequal relationships draws on Hochschild's work on the 'gift economy' between men and women. Gift exchange has been used in other contexts to account for the gendered ways that labour and power are divided in families. Hochschild (2003) explains, for example, that in a two working household, a man may feel that his small contribution to taking care of the house is actually much more than either the average man does, or than what his father did. He therefore sees his household work as 'extra' and as a 'gift' to his wife, and feels he can legitimately expect gratitude from his wife. His wife, working just as much as her husband, may not see his contribution to household work as a gift, since she does far more. She may see his participation in household work as an obligation, just as he sees her household work. Such a situation might lead to a dissolution of the relationship since there is discordance in their understanding of gifting and "the sense of a genuine giving and receiving is a part of love" (2003:105).

[141] See Puri's study (1997) on Harlequin and Mills & Boon readers in India; these books show alternative models of behaviour for young Indian women – heroines in working independent positions – to which her participants aspired. But many were depressed by the discrepancy between the lives of the books' protagonists and what they saw as their inability to live a similar life.

As Hochschild goes on to explain, “Crucial to a healthy economy of gratitude is a common interpretation of reality” (2003:105). In order for the continued perseverance of the relationship, both husband and wife must have a common understanding of gift giving and receiving. It seems to me that in India both women and men see whatever the man does in terms of household work as a ‘gift’ and women being allowed to work part time as a ‘bonus’ and the sign of a liberal, broadminded man. That is both men and women are invested in the idea that women are ‘meant to’ stay at home and take the role of the primary carer, and men are ‘meant to’ take the role of the primary earner, giving him more power to make decisions in the family.

This leaves me feeling pessimistic about the chance of change. But Hochschild argues that “changes in the broader culture also shift the many tiny mental baselines that undergird a person’s sense of a gift” (Hochschild 2003:104). So we might optimistically see some change in the future, since ideas of modernity and broadmindedness were related to gender equity by my informants.

**iii. ‘Deep acting’**

Here I once again draw on the work of Arlie Hochschild. As outlined in the literature review, Hochshild proposes that people follow ‘feeling rules’ in gauging the appropriate emotions for particular social situations (Hochschild 1983). She makes a distinction between ‘surface acting’ and ‘deep acting’; surface acting is when a person displays the relevant emotion to the situation, such as a hostess smiling when greeting her guests. ‘Deep acting’ involves a person pushing herself to actually *experience* the appropriate emotions at the appropriate time, such as invoking tears at a funeral. I suspect that the newly married women who I interviewed and spoke with in Baroda were unwilling to put a critical lens on their relationship, and instead took on the ‘feeling rules’ of a modern loving marriage.

It is not that my informants were lying; rather they were invested in the story of a happy and loving companionate marriage. Since most of the couples I met were newly-weds, in what they called the *“honeymoon period”,* this possibly exacerbated women’s investment in a story of conjugal relations and left little room for a critique of their situation or relationship with their husband. As Lewontin notes:

> “People do not tell themselves the truth about their own lives. The need to create a satisfying narrative out of an inconsistent and often irrational and disappointing jumble of feelings and events leads each of us to write and re-write our autobiographies… these stories… become the basis for further conscious manipulation and manufacture when we have exchange with other human beings.” (1995:44)

The ‘happy ever after’ story is particularly strong in the romantic love discourse. Contrary then to current thought on ‘modern intimacy’, love may be *contributing* to women’s inability to negotiate a more equal relationship. While before gender roles were taken as a matter of duty and obligation, they could now be construed as a means to show love and affection, creating further pressure on women to fulfil traditional female roles and decreasing their ability to bargain for more equal relationships.[142]

Looking at the narratives of the young men and women I met and interviewed in Baroda, these three explanations appear to both overlap and reinforce one another. Women’s low social capital, together with the ideal of a loving companionate marriage, encourages her to lay claim to the role of mother-carer and receive her husband’s housework (for example) as a gift. In other words, in a society where love was less idealized, she might have less reason to portray her relationship and position within it as ‘equal’ and happy. Yet a word of caution should be added; these findings were captured in early marriage when women have the least ‘bargaining’ power (Jeffery and Jeffery 2006) and some women were only beginning to develop a more intimate relationship with their husband. As I have mentioned before, many women I interviewed linked ideals of companionate marriage with more equality; they may be building ties of affection now which later can be used to bargain for a more egalitarian relationship with their husband.

### *Conclusion*

The evidence presented here suggests that women seek more egalitarian relationships with their husbands. In particular this was articulated around the right to work outside of the home, and men’s participation in housework and caring for children. Men were more ambiguous; they seemed to both celebrate and fear women’s emancipation, linking women’s work outside of the home with the degeneration of ‘Indian’ family ideals.

Giddens (1992) proposes that ‘modern intimate’ relationships will necessarily entail greater equality between the sexes, since ‘disclosing intimacy’ suggests a greater knowledge of and respect for the partner. Using Connell’s framework for gender relations I find that there are discrepancies between women’s desire for more equality and the reality of their relationships, as they described them to me. Thus it seems in India that increased intimacy or the increased emphasis on affect between a couple does not necessarily lead to increased equality and I hypothesise that in fact it may contribute to continued traditional caring roles for women. Yet young men and women express satisfaction with their relationships and gender roles, which appear to fit in with their desired ‘modern’ persona and love story. It could be that newly married couples are unwilling to put a critical lens on their relationship, or that a transitional period has

[142] See Collier (1997) for a discussion on how modern relationships have moved from ‘duty to desire’.

been captured in this study. But women and men's stories suggest that the discourses of love and modernity offer sufficient positive attractions, without clashing with established norms of gender, the family and what it means to be 'Indian.' Or put simply: love is enough.

# Chapter Eleven: The making and unmaking of an egalitarian marriage amongst British Gujaratis

Issues around gender roles and relations were a sensitive topic with some of my informants. A case in point was Darsha (F) and Pretak (M). I had my first interview with them in their East London apartment. They were interested and engaged in the interview and answered my questions thoughtfully. Towards the end of this interview, however, I asked them to tell me about living together, how they organise their time together and other things such as housework. It seemed I touched on a sore point: Pretak immediately said (half joking I think) *"Okay, that's a big issue"* and Darsha said, *"In our house it is a conflict issue, a big one."* A long conversation ensued on how Darsha and Pretak negotiated the housework between them. Pretak rather defensively told me that he *"didn't care"* what the house looked like, whereas Darsha liked to have it clean everyday. As such this meant that Darsha was more likely to cook and clean since it was more important to her than to him. Pretak told Darsha that she didn't have to cook and clean the house, and turning to me said *"But she loves me, so of course she does do it."*

This situation seemed to be quite distressing for Darsha who told me in a subsequent interview, *"Pretak doesn't do housework, that is a massive issue for me, like I am not one of those people that thinks it's okay."* Darsha explained how as she was growing up she saw her mother take on the role of 'housewife' and a subordinate role to her husband who made all the decisions in the house. Now she was keen to have a partner who treated her like an equal and contributed equally to housework. She explained how they both worked full time, and both contributed equally to the household finances – then wasn't it fair that Pretak contributed equally to the housework?

After that first interview Pretak took me aside and told me he found it *"sexist"* that I had asked about *"housework"* and not other things such as *"driving" and "maintenance"*. I had not meant to limit necessarily my question to cooking and cleaning but promised to hear him out at our next interview. Two weeks later we met in his office:

> *Pretak: Well, the reason I was saying, the reason I mentioned it is because a lot of – like I get a – I am getting a lot of grief from friends about not cleaning. Yeah, and I say well, there is a lot of other things I do around the house to make it run. You know, cleaning is not the only job that you do to make it run. Maintenance and sorting the bills out, yeah, so not just physical stuff but also sorting bills out. […] This whole feminist drive to say no, you guys have to do cleaning, you have to do cleaning. I am like, well, no it's not I have to do cleaning. It's that there is stuff that needs to be done and who is going to be responsible for it. And it makes the person that's at home is the person that's responsible for it and the*

*person that's going out and earning the money – is they are not responsible for it, in that kind of split. Which I think is this – what this split will happen when we eventually have kids and our ability to have to work together is going to happen.* **Pretak (M), UK**

Pretak in part defended his lack of cooking and cleaning by the fact that he did 'maintenance' work and looked after bills. According to him, it is 'feminism' that is pushing men to feel bad about their contribution to the house, whereas he feels that there is no inherent sexism in a man doing more typically male things in the house – it is simply a convenient division of labour. There is some logic to his argument. Yet both Darsha and his friends appear to feel that there is still imbalance in their household division of labour. Pretak further defends himself on the basis that the person 'at home' has the responsibility of the housework which the person working does not – despite the fact that he and Darsha both work full time. As discussed further below, the expectation was that women will give up full time work after having kids. It seemed that such expectations were already justifying a gendered split of labour for Pretak. Still, Pretak told me that he was attempting to change his ways and they had devised various compromises, including giving Pretak specific daily tasks to accomplish. Eventually, however, Darsha employed a housekeeper to clean their flat.

This story illustrates some of the themes which I discuss in this chapter. Until now I have focused primarily on ideologies of love and courtship before marriage. I have discussed how informants in the UK seemed to place a strong emphasis on the romantic aspects of their relationships; love was seen as spontaneous and value-free, and 'love marriage' – that is a self-initiated marriage – was preferred to 'introduced marriage' by most people I met. In this chapter I explore whether this move towards a more individualised and seemingly companionate marriage impacts on the gender roles and relations which my informants describe in their relationships.

## *11.1 Ideals of Equality*

Equality was an important ideal for both men and women in the UK, with some small variation about what that meant.

### 11.1.1 Women's ideals of equality

As illustrated in Darsha and Pretak's story above, women in the UK expressed their desire to be treated equally by their partners and future husbands.[143] Many women in particular referred to their careers and contributions to the finances of the house in demonstrating the equity of their relationship. Darsha herself was clearly very concerned about equality in housework. Other

[143] As with informants in India I did not ask directly about 'equality', rather about a desired 'ideal spouse' and important attributes of a 'successful marriage'.

informants were more concerned with receiving 'respect' and appreciation from their partners. In particular women were concerned that there was no hierarchy between a husband and wife and that decisions would be made together:

> *KT: You said you see 'respect'? What, can you give me an example of how you see respect in your relationship?*
>
> *Ameera: In our relationship? …. Decisions that we make . we generally consult one another . and .. even though you know one might be the primary person who's done the work or done the driving behind it . just valuing an opinion and not assuming that you're correct. .. Seeing it as a partnership and valuing that other person and what they bring . to the two of you.* **Ameera (F), UK**

> *KT: You had broadminded as number two* [in ranking traits] *so quite important?*
>
> *Rama: Very yeah.*
>
> *KT: And what did you mean by broadminded?*
>
> *R: Someone who'll accept me for who I am and not try to change me into what they perceive as the perfect woman and someone who'll, yeah who'll want to be my equal and not just say "well you've got to do what I want, you've got to take my surname" etc. etc.* **Rama (F), UK**

Being treated with respect and 'as an equal' were associated with a 'modern' and 'broadminded' outlook.

Some informants, such as Renu and Rama, felt that white English men were more broadminded than Indian men, which was part of their attraction. But other women felt that Indian men could be broadminded too, although such an attitude was associated with an 'English' mentality while an Asian mentality was associated with a sexist ideology. As Ameera explains:

> *A: I think my views are probably more akin to . white English couples than probably Indian couples. It's probably . yeah as broad a statement that might be, I think that might be the case.*
>
> *KT: In terms of what?*
>
> *A: .. The relationship in general.*
>
> *KT: In which sense?*
>
> *A: .. Equality, roles, those sorts of things. Where we differ* [from white English couples] *I think . they're probably just family backgrounds or family expectations.* **Ameera (F), UK**

As such there were two facets to 'equality' as expressed by women in the UK: One was in terms of what Connell refers to as 'labour'; women were broadly concerned about sharing household work with their husband or partner, as seen with Darsha in her relationship with Pretak. The other was in terms of mutual respect and shared decision making, what Connell refers to as 'power'.

Women expected to be treated equally in their relationships and were confident that they would find 'broadminded' men who share their values.

### 11.1.2 Men's ideals

In terms of equality between the sexes, men in the UK tended to emphasise the importance of marrying an equal 'peer':

> *Mahendra: So I need someone like Ameera who's my peer, who challenges me intellectually … and ….. and, and emotionally too in that it's not all .. she doesn't just .. do whatever I want to do or do whatever I say or .. look to satisfy my, all my needs, all my wants. She has things that she wants and needs too and I . get a kick out of being able to give those things to her.* **Mahendra (M), UK**

> *Pretak: Whereas in this relationship, you know, for me it's much more of a partnership where it's not about what she says, it's not about what I say, it's about what we both say and we both come to a conclusion and that dialogue that we have can be quite aggressive at times.* **Pretak (M), UK**

The men I interviewed disparaged other men who sought to marry someone subordinate or passive. Pretak, for example, told me about a friend who married a woman from India. He surmised rather disdainfully that his friend was looking for a more submissive woman. Likewise Nihal told me he wouldn't marry a woman from India because she was more likely to be dependent on him and he preferred to marry a woman who was 'equal' and autonomous. Men also differentiated themselves from their fathers and their relationships from their fathers' relationships with their mothers, portraying themselves as more egalitarian.

Nonetheless, like their counterparts in India, men in the UK looked for women who were *"family oriented"* or *"both traditional and modern"* and *"a good mix of east and* west*"*. This, they explained, referred to women who valued family life, and who, like them, would be willing to make sacrifices for their future children. In particular many of my male informants in the UK told me that they felt it was unsustainable to have a two parent working household and were looking for women who felt the same. Some men told me that they themselves would be willing to take on the primary care role, but they felt that women generally prefer to look after children. As we saw with Pretak, the emphasis amongst men was around having a 'partnership' with an equal peer but respecting the *different* roles that men and women bring to a relationship.

## *11.2 Gender roles and equality: ideals to experience*

In this section I return to Connell's (1987) framework for examining gender relations, exploring cathexis, labour, and power.

### 11.2.1 Cathexis

In terms of 'cathexis', I understood that there were equivalent understandings of emotional responsibility from men and women. As discussed in Chapter Seven, men and women consider the other 'number one' and felt that each should give emotional support and love to the other partner. In terms of sexuality, there was some evidence of differing expectations of women and men. While there appeared to be much less emphasis in the UK on the 'purity' and virginity of women, some women felt that having sex outside of a committed relationship 'cheapened' them. Men on the other hand appeared to be under pressure to have sexual experiences earlier.

Those women who felt that sex outside of a committed relationship 'cheapened' them, tended to come from 'Gujarati' areas, or more 'traditional' families i.e. Darsha, Ameera, and Prity (see Table 3.2).[144] Here Darsha talks about why she never had a 'one night stand' or kissed male strangers in a nightclub:

> *I thought it was cheapening. I felt a little bit like, imagine a white piece of paper and every time somebody touches it, kind of leaves a smudge or a dark mark. And I thought the more that you smudge it, the more marks you have, the horrible – the worse it gets. […] And I felt a little bit more like you would be more special by not doing that. … I just felt it was a bit cheap.* **Darsha (F), UK**

These women had only had sex with their current partner (and one had never had sexual intercourse) so this attitude could be related to the fact that they had never had a relationship after their first sexual relationship, which for all informants was the one in which sex was delayed the longest. They appeared to disapprove of the idea that sex should only be within marriage, telling me *"it's society, the idea that you shouldn't be sleeping with someone before you get married"* but that they themselves felt that "*it's more important . to have slept with someone you love whether that's within marriage or not"*.[145] Those women who believe that sex should only be within marriage were typified as overly traditional and conservative.

In contrast, Renu, Lona, and Rama spoke freely about their sexual experiences and did not feel that sex should only happen within a committed relationship. They saw no need to 'wait' for sex, though they all did so the first time they had sex. As one of them told me:

[144] Renu also comes from a 'Gujarati area' but as I explain below, had different views to these three women.
[145] Certain statements in this chapter are cited without reference to the exact speaker due to the sensitivity of the topic.

*It was about a month before I actually slept with [previous partner] .. [current partner] is the first person I have ever, we've kissed and then I slept with him that night. That's the first person I've ever done that with. Normally it's like it's a bit of a wait and now I probably wouldn't have that kind of wait anyway. Maybe I was just you know younger but yeah.*

Nonetheless, there was a feeling that too many sexual partners or losing virginity when still a teenager was 'lower class'. As Renu rather apologetically explains:

*I think of it as real like God this going to sound so judgmental. I'm like only pikey*[146] *children have sex when their 16 years old. I think of it as a real like be a kid and then have sex, do you know what I mean?* **Renu (F), UK**

Renu felt this was the case for men as well as for women and is possibly provoked by the abundant media attention given to the 'problem' of teenage pregnancy amongst working class youth.

Why were these women less likely than the 'Gujarati area' women informants to feel that sex with more than one partner was cheapening? It seemed to me that Renu, Lona, and Rama were more invested in mainstream British ideas of appropriate sexuality. In fact these three women appeared to identify more in general with a British identity. Lona, for example, in her first interview emphasised the fact that she had grown up in a 'mostly white area' and her similarity to her white English peers:

*KT: And how did you find growing up in an area, a "mostly white" /area?*

*L: /I think it was great! Like you, I mean, I didn't even notice it, I didn't even register it and I guess the only time I noticed it like, oh my God, like that was unusual or whatever, was like, like a lot of Sohan's*[147] *university friends are Indian and a lot of their growing up background was totally different to ours.*

Likewise Rama grew up in a 'mostly white' area and considered herself quite different to other Gujaratis who grew up in Gujarati areas (see opening section of Chapter Five). Renu on the other hand grew up in a Gujarati area but portrayed her family as unusually liberal and cosmopolitan with a long history of love marriage. In addition, all of Renu's boyfriends had been white. These three women repeatedly drew attention to how different they felt to 'typical Indians' and aligned themselves more with white English culture. To some extent this explains their attitude to sex since public stories of relationships in the UK portray early progress to sex in a relationship as natural (Jamieson 1998:131).

Women who grew up in Indian or Gujarati areas are also exposed to these public stories, but equally they are surrounded by stories of the 'cheapness' of 'sleeping around'. For example, Darsha explained her reluctance to 'sleep around' by her 'sheltered upbringing':

[146] A derogatory term used to refer to Travellers, Gypsies or people of lower class.
[147] Her husband

*It just goes to show with my sheltered life, the kind of ideals that I grew up with, and what I expected from a relationship, and I was horrified, you know, at the thought of him [husband] sleeping around, I would never have been one of them girls.* **Darsha (F), UK**

In fact, Darsha goes on to suggest that Pretak did not marry any of his previous girlfriends since they were willing to let him have multiple sexual partners at the same time, whereas she was only willing to have sex with him once they were in a monogamous committed relationship. This is interesting because previously she had considered her 'sheltered' upbringing as a disadvantage, but in terms of sexuality she considers it an advantage. This seems to be primarily due to her association of multiple sexual partners with 'cheap' behaviour.

But while there was some self-regulation on the number of partners that a woman could respectably have, in particular for women from 'Gujarati' areas, men reported some pressure to *lose* their virginity in or by late adolescence. As Naveen says, "*You know, if you haven't done anything. . Then you know, you are sort of up for a bit of piss taking."* With this in mind, some men described *"jumping into bed"* with the first available woman in order to get their first sexual experience *"over and done with"*. There was some regret about this expressed, but mostly it was laughed off during the interview. Here one male informant talks about his first sexual experience:

*It was just one of those things . I suppose. . like to be honest, I was just like . don't know [Laughs] I just like to get this over and done with. Em . You know, cause you think "oh shit, I still haven't done this." .. Um . so yeah, it wasn't really .. especially thought out sort if thing.*

Yogesh was the only man who wanted to keep sex for marriage in the UK. As before, his interviews are more similar to those from India, as he recognises himself.

In terms of sexuality within relationships or marriage, like informants in India, informants in the UK emphasised the importance of mutual satisfaction and pleasure.

*Nihal: Healthy sexuality might …. I don't know. [...] I suppose . certainly consensual so no sense of, only if both parties actually wanted to by which I don't mean rape but I mean just consensual .. not obligated.* **Nihal (M), UK**

*KT: It kind of brings me on to the question of what do you think is a healthy sexuality?*
*Mahendra: Frequent, varied, responsive – responsive to one another. So I don't think it's a one way street. And fulfilling, of course, for both sides.* **Mahendra (M), UK**

There was some assumption that mutually pleasurable sex was not part of an 'Asian mentality', which was more associated with passive female sexuality. For example, one woman told me she sometimes wondered whether she was 'too open' with her partner around sex:

*And I sometimes, I say to [partner] actually that . again taking from the society's perspective . a woman talking about sex even with her husband is not really done. A woman is supposed to just submit to her husband and it's supposed to be her husband's desire, then a woman is just supposed to come along with, excuse the phrase, the ride! [Laughs] And I said to [partner] I said, "Gosh should I be a bit more of the typical Asian .. should I have more of the Asian wife mentality? Is it a bit weird that we're talking about this [sex]?" He sort of really dismisses me and says "don't say that, don't."*

Thus being able to have an open and mutually satisfying sexual relationship was considered part of having a more equal relationship, and was associated by some with more 'British' values.

### 11.2.2 Labour

In terms of 'labour' (whether men and women fall into gendered patterns of work) there is more ambiguity. At the time of the interviews both members of all the couples were working full time and reported contributing more or less equally to the household finances. As we can see from Pretak's experience of friends scolding him for not doing enough in the house, it was deemed irresponsible or unjust for both not to contribute to household work when both were working full time. There was some evidence though that women's household work could be construed as 'caring' work, and a means of showing affection for her husband, which was not reciprocated. As we saw above, Pretak told me that Darsha complains about cooking and cleaning but ultimately she does it because she loves him. Likewise, Mahendra noted that Ameera did more household work which he interpreted as a reflection of her caring nature.

Nonetheless, we can see that at present with both male and female partners working full time, informants broadly expected equal participation from both in terms of housework and financial contributions. But all informants subscribed to the idea of the woman as carer and the man as 'breadwinner'. While such a division was not present at the time of the interviews, it was expected that after having children the roles of husband and wife would become more 'traditional'. In particular it is expected that the woman will either give up outside work entirely or start working part time once there are children. When probed, all of my 'main' married informants said that men *could* stay at home and some told me they had seriously considered it, but that ultimately it seemed they expected the woman to prefer to stay at home with the children or that she was a 'naturally' better carer.

Whether women really preferred to stay at home was not clear. They seemed to change opinions over the course of the interviews. Largely I felt that a man staying at home as a full time carer was deemed too unrealistic by women. Ameera, for example, laughs at the idea of her husband Mahendra staying at home looking after the children, telling me he is the *"provider"* in their

relationship (although she currently earns more). But as I probe a bit further, she seems more ambivalent:

> *KT: In what regards is that his role because, I'm just wondering why you think it's kind of funny the idea that he might stay at home with the kids?*
>
> *A: I think he [Laughs] I found it funny because he thinks it's staying at home playing with the kids. That's his idea. .. I don't, I mean if he wanted to do that I .. I'd be fine with it but I'm . I want to spend time with the kids too. .. If, actually what would be amazing is if we could both do it, so that you know for a certain period of . our lives I'm at home with the kids and he goes out to work and for another period if it is possible at all, I got to work and he looks after the kids. I would love for him to stay at home and look after our children . if he wanted to do that and if we were in a position to be able to do that. Yeah I'd . I would love that relationship. […] I don't think that can be done.* **Ameera (F), UK**

Ameera felt that her husband was unlikely to stay at home, or that both sharing the care of children equally was too difficult in terms of following two careers. She then went on to say that mutual respect for the different roles and each other's *"strengths and weaknesses"* was more important than necessarily sharing childcare:

> *So yeah I mean . equality, knowing our strengths and weaknesses …… as . I hate the word cause I don't really know what it means but as 'modern' as my thinking is in terms of Asian mentality, I do like the idea of being looked after.* **Ameera (F), UK**

Such views on gendered roles were common amongst my informants and seemed to rely on the idea of the woman as a naturally better carer and the man the provider. Even when some women were earning more than their partners.

But even as couples saw their relationships becoming more 'traditional' after having children, most informants felt that their relationships or future relationships were more 'modern' than the relationships of couples who meet one another through a family arranged introduction, as Pretak explains:

> *KT: And you said you thought there were more compromises in a sort of an introduced marriage shall we say?*
>
> *P: I don't think it's more compromise, I think, the discussions are a lot less because within that introduction, you know, as a male your job is to go out, get a job bring it back to the home. You know, female's role is to take care of the house, do the cooking and fit in those roles. And I think, not everyone, but largely, majority of people appreciate that, that go into that kind of . that format.* **Pretak (M), UK**

This was one of the reasons that some of my informants were less likely to want an introduced marriage. Naveen professed to be *"scared*" of going through with an introduction process since he anticipated that those women would have higher expectations of finding a high-salaried

breadwinner and would be less likely to contribute to the household finances. Even though he felt that one of the main *"responsibilities"* of a husband was to *"ensure that the electricity is not cut off."* Ameera too noted that there were more 'traditional' expectations in an introduced marriage and was 'coached' by her parents to answer questions to potential suitors in a way which portrayed her as more traditional and less career oriented. Thus informants saw themselves as more 'modern' than some other Asians in Britain, even as they adhered to gendered stereotypes of the mother-carer father-provider model.

### 11.2.3 Power

Examining power means interrogating who makes decisions and who has control over financial resources. Men and women differed in their interpretations of the balance of power in their relationships. Most men I met saw themselves as the (future) 'head of household' and thus the ultimate or primary decision maker.[148] For example:

> *Nihal: I see it as a similar sort of level of a patriarchy whereby I would see myself taking on more of the head of household overall similar to what my dad has done and* [girlfriend] *doesn't seem to want to or care but she would certainly run it like and look after everything.*
> *KT: Okay. What do you mean by head of the household thing? So that -*
> *N: Like the bread – winning bread, and maybe how I see it is making some of the bigger decisions as well.*
> *KT: Okay.*
> *N: Not all by myself but kind of – if there had to be foot putdown moment I'd probably see it heading more in my direction except for a few things which aren't as big.* **Nihal (M), UK**

> *KT: And also you mentioned .. that you saw yourself as the head of the household. What exactly, what is the head of household, what does the head of the household do or what do you mean by that?*
> *Mahendra: [7 seconds] I.e. basically the buck stops with me . on .. on a .. whether it's [8 seconds] whether it's the emotional . aspect, whether it's the financial aspect …. you know . …but I need to have, I need to have responsibility for where we're going and what we're doing and how we're going to get there. .. I think that's my role as head of the household.*
> **Mahendra (M), UK**

Of course, just because these men say they are the 'head of the household' doesn't mean they are, but it does raise questions about their earlier pronouncements on wanting an 'equal' relationship with a 'peer'. Such an attitude was not expressed by all of the men I interviewed however. Naveen for example was very clear that he did not foresee himself or his wife as a 'head' of the house, but rather envisioned a more collaborative approach to decision-making. But

[148] The term 'head of the household' emerged spontaneously in interviews after I asked about decision making between the couple.

with most men there was a sense that there should be one final decision maker and that men tended to be more suited to that – either because the woman expressed no interest in making 'larger decisions', such as suggested by Nihal, or because women tended to think more short term.

But even as most men see themselves as 'heads of the house', women felt that they made decisions equally with their partners, which was an important demonstration of the aforementioned 'respect' which they valued in their relationships. Primarily examples of financial decision making were cited in showing me the ethos of shared decision making:

> *The joint money has to be consulted upon and it's joint decisions on sharing it.* **Darsha (F), UK**

> *We very much do see the money as our money whether I bring it in or he brings it in, even though it's in his account and my account respectively.* **Ameera (F), UK**

As mentioned before, all the women I interviewed were earning their own money, some more than their partner or husband. Thus 'control' of resources was not an issue, but as suggested by Ameera, women foresaw this continuing even after they gave up work with money being considered belonging to the couple rather than any individual. Thus it seems that in terms of 'power' women emphasized the importance of shared decision making and men tended to portray themselves as the ultimate decision maker.

### *11.3 Gender equality?*

As with informants in India, there is some evidence of double standards around sexuality, with some women in the UK feeling vulnerable to a charge of 'cheapness' or of acting lower class if they sleep with too many men, or lose their virginity too young. Other research in the UK has noted that categories of class are often determined by women's behaviour, particularly in relation to her perceived sexuality (Finch 1993; Skeggs 2009). On the other hand, male informants reported feeling under pressure to lose their virginity and appeared more concerned that they had sufficient sexual experience than too much. Such gender disparities have been frequently reported in studies conducted with white English and ethnic minority youths in Britain (e.g. Holland et al. 1998; Holland 1993). Nonetheless there is some evidence amongst my informants that couples value mutual satisfaction and pleasure. As with informants in Baroda, female informants reported feeling sexually confident with their partners, suggesting that at least within relationships informants expect sexual equality.

In terms of 'labour' and 'power' women felt that they were considerably better off than their mothers and they reported feeling respected and appreciated by their partners and husbands. Yet as in India there was evidence of gendered expectations around labour, and a feeling on the part of men that they were appropriately the primary decision-maker. How women felt about this was unclear; on the one hand they told me they wanted to look after their children, on the other they felt that a reversal of roles or sharing of childcare was 'unrealistic'. To some extent then in the UK as in India 'resistance was futile': Although women in the UK have economic power and social capital, they seem unable to negotiate less gendered roles. This was explained both in terms of men's likely preference to work and by wider structures which make it difficult for both members of a couple to pursue a career *and* share childcare responsibilities. A broader shift in these roles then would require changes in wider structures which could allow more flexible working conditions and paternity leave, so that both partners could potentially take time out from work without disrupting their careers.

But even as women put forward the idea that it was inevitable that they took on the principal caring role, they defended this division of labour by emphasising the idea of 'equal but different'. That is, women told me that although they may not be earning in the future, their caring role was just as important as their husband's earning role and that husband and wife would therefore make an equal albeit different contribution to the house. Similar findings have been observed in research with English couples in the UK; Cheal for example has argued that men and women use the idea of 'complementary gifts' to overlook the inequalities within their relationship – that is that the man shows his care for the household through his pay packet and she through her domestic duties (Cheal 1988 in Jamieson 1999). Such findings are disturbing since it is not clear that women are able to opt out of the carer role (or men from the provider role) which seems to be expected if not assumed by their partners. Furthermore, men's assessment of themselves as 'head of the household' seems to be linked to their perception of the man as breadwinner.

This idea of 'complementary gifts' has bearing on what Hochschild has referred to as the 'sense of gratitude' or gifting (2003:104-118) as outlined in Chapter Ten. But the idea of what is a gift (i.e. what a person should be grateful for)[149] is unstable amongst UK informants who vacillated between aspiring to more non-gendered ideals of behaviour and acceptance of gendered roles as the status-quo. That is, while most couples viewed women's caring household work as a gift to the couple and the man's work outside the home as a gift, women also refuted this model, even after endorsing it. This implies that the "tiny mental baselines that undergird a person's sense of a gift" (Hochschild 2003:104) may be in flux. There is also a possibility that informants were concerned about creating and portraying their relationships as ones of harmony and affection,

[149] The use of the word 'gift' by both Cheal and Hochschild is confusing! Cheal refers to gift as in 'talent', Hochschild as 'present'.

and evidence of unequal relations or dissatisfaction were therefore downplayed in their interviews with me. As recognised by Jamieson, public stories of intimacy assume the importance of equality for conjugal relations (Jamieson 1998). Gendered roles were then justified as 'complementary' or desired. The exception was Darsha and Pretak who were the only couple that reported friction over gendered labour roles. Although it was clearly Darsha who had instigated debates around gendered expectations in their house, Pretak ultimately appeared to be quite proud of their *"aggressive"* deliberations (quoted above). Ironically then changes in gendered behaviour seem to be more likely to arise through 'aggression' than intimate 'mutual disclosing' (cf. Jamieson 1999).

## *Conclusion*

The findings described here give little credence to Giddens's theory (1992) that modern intimacy or the 'pure relationship' will result in equality between the sexes. Rather the data concurs with Jamieson's review of intimacy studies in the UK where she concludes: "Men and women routinely both invoke gender stereotypes or turn a convenient blind eye to gendering processes when making sense of themselves as lovers" (Jamieson 1999:491). While the discourse of gender equality is strong, in practice gendered roles continue, despite the importance placed on the conjugality of the couple. As in Baroda the strong emphasis on intimacy and love may be exacerbating gendered roles; women show their love to their husband through taking on duties typically associated with female caring behaviour and, as Pretak remarks, cook and clean because she loves him.

Yet even as I put forward this rather pessimistic portrayal of the gender relations between informants in the UK, it's clear that men and women are negotiating more and more the boundaries of gendered behaviour. As such even as Darsha loves Pretak, she refused to take the role of cleaner in their house, until eventually they settled on employing a housekeeper. Such findings suggest that there is a growing expectation of equality, at least before there are children. Whether and how having children changes their relationships remains to be seen; life course research shows that in the UK generally, women's (and not men's) domestic labour increases sharply after giving birth and does not decrease until after children have left home (Gershuny and Kan 2008). This is thought to also contribute to the gender pay gap which increases strongly at the point when children are born (Gershuny and Kan 2008). Then far from being the 'ultra traditional' British Asian men and women sometimes portrayed in the media (cf. Alexander 2002), the couples I interviewed would appear to reflect trends found amongst UK couples generally.

# PART FOUR: CONCLUSIONS

# Chapter Twelve: Comparing the narratives of young Gujarati men and women in the UK and India

In this thesis we have seen that in India and the UK, young Gujaratis' quest to be 'modern' has been articulated in particular around issues of choice and autonomy in intimate relationships. In practice, this means around marriage, since the hegemonic discourse of marriage holds importance in both contexts. Yet in India caste, class, and filial duty are also important to informants when they choose their future spouse. Informants want to *"have love arranged"*; they want to have a love relationship with their future spouse but only within the conditions of a socially approved match – with a family agreed spouse from the same caste or status background. I have found that in order to do this informants in India are reinterpreting forms of arranged marriage, imbuing them with romantic ideals and elements of choice.

In the UK 'traditional' criteria in choosing a spouse are downplayed and even denied to be of any importance. Informants spent considerable time convincing me of the 'natural' progression of their spontaneous and value-free relationships. Love marriage is strongly favoured and introduced marriage is considered by many as a 'last resort'. Where introductions are used, informants emphasise their similarity to 'love marriage' and compare introduction processes to 'speed' and online dating. A discourse of 'love above all else' emerges, even when informants prefer to marry someone of the same ethnicity, community, and educational and occupational background. Such diversity in experiences and ideals amongst two groups of Gujraratis who have been brought up in the UK or in India can be explained by the historical, cultural and structural / socio-economic contexts in which my informants find themselves.

In India, as discussed in Chapter Four, economic liberalisation policies instigated in the 1990s have led to far reaching changes. A 'new middle class' has emerged in Baroda, as elsewhere in India – new not only in terms of its occupational make-up (from public service to private corporation professionals) but also in its discursive project (Donner 2008; Fernandes 2000, 2006). While before the middle classes were associated with Indian tradition, they are now implicated in discourses around globalisation, modernisation, and consumption. The media has encouraged this view, with the new middle classes portrayed in advertisements and films as the modernising force behind the emerging global power of India (Appadurai and Breckenridge 1995). Such modernisation is linked to consumption; increasingly it is the accumulation of wealth and consumer goods rather than caste which signifies status (Beteille 1996; Desai 2008).

These changes have prompted intense debates all over India on what it means to be both modern and Indian (Dell 2005; Donner 2008). An integral part of this debate revolves around

gender, intimacy, and marriage. In the media, spontaneous love affairs and youth autonomy are presented as key elements of a modern marriage. In Baroda my informants link modernity with choice and love for a future spouse. It is not that love is new, but that marriage is increasingly understood within the idiom of love. Such changes in ideologies around marriage are echoed by researchers working in many different contexts around the globe. For example in Mexico, Brazil and Papua New Guinea authors have described a move away from 'traditional' understandings of marriage to a more 'companionate' marriage model – one in which affective goals take priority over reproductive and economic ones (see: Hirsch 2003; Rebhun 1999; Wardlow 2006). Hirsch and Wardlow argue that some women are attracted to companionate marriage in the hope that this will lead to a more egalitarian marriage (Wardlow and Hirsch 2006). I have described similar desires amongst my informants, as well as hopes that a companionate marriage will lead to more autonomy from parents-in-law and demonstrate the 'choice' which young people exercise in their marital arrangements.

But even as informants describe their marriages in terms of love and choice, they consider family participation in the selection of a spouse as essential. 'Indianess' is proudly associated with a more family oriented perspective; informants are suspicious of changes which might lead to increased individualisation and the 'breakdown' of the family. Furthermore, as previous research in India has shown, the system of arranged marriage was historically heralded as a superior system of controlled and civilised sexuality amongst middle class Indians, in comparison to the British system of 'love marriages' (Dell 2005). Global ideologies of love and romance integrate sexuality and love but the 'purity' or virginity of women before marriage is related to upper caste ideology and middle class respectability. Thus there is some ambiguity around changes in family and intimate relationships which are viewed as both a positive force for modernization and possibly more equality, and the regrettable consequence of globalisation. This provokes an ambiguous relation between love, sex, and marriage, in particular due to the perceived threat which physical love implies to systems of arrangement and caste/class endogamy. As such my informants in India linked love with desire within marriage, but portrayed premarital relationships as 'untainted' by physical love.

New discourses on what it means to be both modern and middle class have interacted with old ideas of what constitutes status. My informants are concerned not only with global discourses on 'companionate marriage' and youth culture, but also with national and local ideologies of what constitutes a 'respectable' middle class marriage. That is, equally they must uphold and justify a position above that of the lower castes and classes, while also embracing 'modern' marriage practices. As Dell puts it, there is pressure to keep up with "'the Jones' and yet steadfastly remaining 'the Chatterjees'" (Dell 2005:194).

Greater emphasis on wealth as a means to establish status also results in some parents (and women) putting more weight on the earning potential of a future spouse for their daughter. This leads to greater pressure on men to be successful earners, since there seems to be on-going 'shame' in receiving money from women. But as men increasingly become defined as breadwinners, women become defined as housewives (Osella and Osella, 2006). Thus while some women associate 'companionate marriage' with more equality, they also choose someone who earns more money and who has a better education than themselves. As such they appear to unwittingly contribute to their subordinate position. This concurs with research conducted by Pat Caplan (1985) amongst upper caste women in Calcutta in the 1980s. She argued that the women she met took on the role of full time carer in part because such a role demonstrates that the husband's salary is sufficiently large to maintain the family, thus perpetuating the patriarchal system which privileged them in other ways.

But in studying gender amongst Indians it is important to remember that over the course of the life-cycle the status of men and women can change quite dramatically (Jeffery and Jeffery 2006). The informants in my study are young men and women either negotiating the selection of their life partner or only recently married. In drawing conclusions about their relative power to one another and within the family, it is important to remember that a study conducted with the same informants but at a different period in their lives could reveal quite different stories. In particular, a new bride in her husband's home is positioned at the lowest end of the status pile, but in time she could take on the more powerful role of the 'mother-in-law'.

Then it seems that in order to embrace both a modern identity and a marriage different to those of the lower classes, informants in India are interpreting older systems of arranged marriage with romantic tinted glasses. Heterosexual monogamous marriage arranged with parental consent emerges as the only legitimate modern form of intimate relations due to a complex conjunction of global romantic ideologies and Indian discourses which situate more open relationships as 'lower caste' and 'cheap'. Many women hope for a more egalitarian companionate marriage. But the association of women at home with an upper and middle class lifestyle combined with the increased pressure on men to be 'successful earners' have impeded greater equality between husband and wife. As research on migrant nurses has shown, the increased desire for a companionate nuclear marriage may in fact inhibit women's wishes for an egalitarian relationship, isolated as they are from kin relations who could help in childcare and household tasks (George 2005). Using an analysis which not only looks at power but also affect (or cathexis) I argue that the increased emphasis on a loving caring relationship may make it difficult for women to negotiate a more egalitarian relationship with their husband; women receive their husbands' help

in the home as a 'gift' and take on ideologies of intimacy between a couple, inhibiting a dialogue which might disrupt this pretty picture.

In the UK, informants live in a context where 'possessive individualism' is the norm. As explained in Chapter Six, this refers to the contention that an individual's freedom is contingent upon independence from the wills of others, and only those relationships entered into voluntarily for her or his interest are 'authentic' (Macpherson 1964:263). Furthermore in the UK there is a strong discourse of romantic love and what Giddens has referred to as the 'pure relationship' (Giddens 1991:58). The 'pure relationship' is signified by a strong emphasis on intimacy and self disclosure which, Giddens argues, leads to mutual respect and greater equality between the sexes (Giddens 1992). While there is little empirical evidence of the 'pure relationship' it is a pervasive ideology permeating people's imaginations and interpretations of their relationships (Jamieson 1998). As such informants in the UK strongly favour love marriage and spent considerable time and effort in demonstrating the authenticity of their 'natural evolving' love which is untainted by the participation of others.

The context of Britain also *facilitates* love marriage amongst young Indian people. The strictures which are in place in India, such as a community which looks down on pre-marital relationships, lack of privacy, lack of economic independence and so on, are not in place in the UK. As I showed in my example of Aruna and Mahendra, a Muslim-Hindu love marriage couple, although their parents were against the marriage, their peers and colleagues were supportive, and their parents were unable to stop them from marrying. In contrast, in Baroda love marriage couples described being ostracised by their peers. Furthermore, Mody (2008) has shown that while the law in India in theory protects love marriage couples, in practice the courts privilege family and community concerns, often nullifying love marriages.

But it is not so clear cut that parents are 'traditional', necessarily preferring arranged marriage, and that second generation Indians are 'modern' preferring love marriage. As Lona pointed out in Chapter Five, many parents came to the UK ready to adapt to the lifestyle around them. Ramji has argued that Gujaratis' experience of being 'twice migrants' meant that they were more likely to abandon the 'migrant myth of return' and thus adapt to British life (2006). As such some young people reported parents colluding in 'hidden' premarital relationships, or actively encouraging 'love marriages'. Systems of introduced marriage have also been adapted so that young people have more time to develop 'love' relationships prior to marriage. Additionally, as parents show some sympathy to ideals of love marriage, so some young people seem to adhere to so-called 'traditional' ideals of a good match. Thus, for example, the vast majority of my main informants wanted to marry someone of the same ethnic origin and occupational or educational

background.[150] Such findings challenge the 'culture clash' hypothesis and refute simplistic dichotomies of 'modern' versus 'traditional' and of 'arranged' versus 'love' marriage.

Nonetheless, the second generation young people I met downplayed any preference to marry someone of the same caste or cultural background. The desire to be considered modern has silenced discourses which contradict the romantic ideal in relationships. As Alexander has forcefully argued, British Asians have been stereotyped in the media and in academia as 'too traditional' (2002, 2004). While other ethnic minority groups are noted for their 'assimilation' into British society, indeed their very influence over British society, contemporary debates about the place of Asians (in particular Asian Muslims) in British society have centred around whether they can 'fit in' at all. Many of these debates hinge on the position of women in Asian culture and 'forced marriage' – sometimes mistakenly referred to as 'arranged marriage'. Academic texts have not helped in this; indeed they have often exacerbated the issue. As discussed in Chapter Two, researchers have tended to essentialise and exoticise Asian men and women in the UK (cf. Gell 1994; Alexander 2002) by concentrating their studies on the most 'unusual' marriage practices, such as more formal arranged marriage traditions and processes. I argue that within this context, my informants have a strong desire to position themselves as modern integrated citizens, distancing themselves from other more 'traditional' communities – such as Pakistani Muslims. As such informants view introduced marriage as a 'last resort', and show a strong preference for love marriage. Even where informants are engaging in introduced marriages, these are couched in terms of love and 'normalised' by their comparison to speed and online dating which, as my informants were quick to point out, white English people also engage in. In short, the society in which young Gujaratis find themselves in the UK both favours and supports love marriage and the discourse of romantic love.

Yet even as I have dichotomised the experiences of informants from these two contexts, the divisions are not so clear cut. On the whole there was more a spectrum of beliefs, with informants in India more strongly relating to those ideologies and practices that I have described in the 'India chapters' and informants from the UK more closely aspiring to behaviours described in the 'UK chapters'. This spectrum can be most clearly seen in relation to sexuality and sexual behaviour before marriage. In India informants believed that a woman should be a virgin before marriage. Premarital sexual behaviour was thought of as 'impure' and linked to lower class behaviour. In the UK most informants felt that a preference for virginity before marriage was an outdated concept, and that sex was a normal part of a 'healthy' relationship. Many had had multiple sexual partners without any moral compunction. But those women who had been brought up in Gujarati areas felt that sex should only happen within a loving committed relationship, they felt that casual sex was

[150] Though as mentioned before this may be due to a perception of exclusion from the white majority (cf. Ramji 2003).

'cheapening' for women relating it to 'pikey' or lower class behaviour. Thus we can see a range of views on sex before marriage depending not only on the country of birth, but also on the locality within that country.

Finally, let me also note that two informants stood out as different to all the others. Kareena was an India-based informant who in many ways was more like informants from the UK. She had had relationships before marriage, she felt that sex before marriage was not 'wrong' (though said she wouldn't engage in it) and she expected to have a love marriage. Yogesh on the other hand was a UK-based informant who in many ways had more similar beliefs and behaviours to those in India.[151] Yogesh was going through introductions when I first met him and explained to me the advantages of such a system over that of a love marriage. He also put a heavy emphasis on virginity before marriage.

Both Yogesh and Kareena recognised their 'difference' to those around them. Kareena, for example, opened our first interview by telling me that she came from a very 'Britishy' family. Her parents had a love marriage, and her parents' parents and so on. She had also lived in the UK for five years after leaving university, which she felt had influenced her outlook substantially. Meanwhile Yogesh had been specifically recommended to me in the UK by another informant as an example of an 'ultra traditional' Gujarati. He came from a Gujarati area, similar to other informants of mine, but had also recently joined the Hindu Hare Krishna sect. This, he told me, had led to a substantial re-appraisal of his life and values.

Then to a certain extent, these differences that I have expanded upon between Gujaratis in the UK and India are not absolute. The context has been important in shaping informants' values and behaviours, but personal life histories and an affinity with a perceived Indian or British identity also impacted on informants' beliefs and practices. While I have foregrounded the narratives of the majority, another researcher conducting a study with, for example, UK-based Indians affiliated to a more 'Indian' identity may evoke different stories from her informants. Needless to say my ethnicity has also potentially impacted on the kind of narratives I collected. This should not discredit what I have written, but bares reflecting on as the reader interprets my findings.

If we return to Giddens's (1991, 1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim's (1995) predictions of modern intimacy, we see that it has not entirely been realised amongst my informants. These scholars and others in India who have argued that a transformation of intimacy has resulted in more 'companionate marriages' (e.g. Fuller and Narasimhan 2008) are only partially correct. While there is a strong preference for more intimacy between a couple in both the UK and India,

[151] Their ranking of desirable spouse traits was also markedly different to their peers. See Appendix C.

marriage as a life long commitment remains a strong discourse in both contexts and the evidence for equality between the sexes is weak. Furthermore, the desire for love is closely linked with discourses on choice and youth autonomy. I have shown that while the discourses around relationships have changed, the actual day to day practices are more resistant to 'transformation'. As Holland *et al* noted in their study of the sexuality of teenagers in Britain,

> "Sexual cultures can change without any concomitant transformation of other layers/levels of heterosexuality. While the language, expectation and appearance of relationships may change, the underlying patterns of heterosexual relationships are striking in their resilience." (Holland *et al.* 1998:193)

Thus it may not be surprising that despite an increased emphasis on intimacy and love between a couple unequal gender relations persist. In fact I argue in this thesis that the increased emphasis on intimacy between couples may paradoxically contribute to women's inability to negotiate a more equal relationship with their husband. This concurs with Grover's research on couples in New Delhi; she found that women who have a love marriage are more reticent about revealing marital problems than women in arranged marriages (Grover 2006). In part this is due to the severed relationship with parents which a love marriage can provoke, but Grover also argues that the "ideological emphasis on the emotional quality of the conjugal relationship has paradoxically enforced marital stability and thus women's dependence on husbands" (2006:207). Thus in Grover's thesis, as in mine, there is some evidence that love promotes more adjustment and acceptance on the part of women unwilling to admit defeat in the face of love.

I began this thesis by recalling my first musings and questions on love and marriage in India. In particular I related the story of Antuk and his marriage to an American Gujarati woman called Leela. Antuk had described to me his yearnings for love and romance, but to my surprise he chose to have an arranged marriage. My journey over the last four years has helped me to understand the choices that Antuk made and the constraints that he was under. While notions of companionate marriage and modern intimacy shaped the kinds of relationship ideals he and other young Gujaratis in the UK and India have, so too have local cultural norms and socio-economic circumstances. Amongst the young people I met there is a continued emphasis on ideologies of family and 'culture', and the importance of class is integral in understanding how they interpret and enact global ideologies of love. This thesis then highlights the impact of globalisation from the perspective of relationships, marriage, and intimacy but also shows that globalisation does not necessarily lead to global homogenisation. Rather I have shown that global ideologies are more likely to be "indigenised" by actors, both willingly and unwillingly, to create new local cultural forms (Appadurai 1994) but that the outcomes of these changes are diverse and sometimes disappointingly small.

# APPENDICES

# Appendix A: Interview Topic Guides

## *A.1 Interviews for Main Informants*

### Interview One

**Objectives:**
- *To explore life histories and context of participants' lives*
- *To hear stories of relationships or aspirations for future relationships*

**2. Family and living circumstances**

- family composition
- religion/caste/social background
- family abroad
- education/job

**3. Life history**

- life line of most significant events
- 'gendered' events
- travel experiences

**4. Hopes for the future**

**5. Story of most significant relationship or ideal relationship**

- future of relationship

### Interview Two

**Objectives:**
- *To delve more in-depth on relationship stories and experiences*
- *To explore how and where courtship happens*
- *To determine different 'types' of relationships*
- *To examine influence of family, friends and context on relationship practices*
- *To explore views on marriage*

**1. Introduction**

**2. Friendships**

- important friendships as growing up and now

**3. Experiences of intimate relationships (if none, skip to question 4)**

- questions left from story in interview one

- different kinds of relationships with opposite sex over life e.g. 'first kiss' or date
- how and where courtship happened
- how and why ended
- parents/family knowledge of relationships
- feelings/emotions associated with experiences

**4. Types of intimate relationships**

- different kinds of relationships possible e.g. friends / relations / media
- motivations for different relationships
- how and where courtship happens
- ideal partner

**5. Views on marriage**

For unmarried participants:

- want to marry - why (not)?
- if yes – when? How?
- How propose to meet spouse?
- ideal husband or wife
- why might marriage end? (Infidelity?)

For married participants:

- why chose to marry
- how met and chose spouse
- marriage ceremony
- how is life after marriage
- how spend time with spouse
- what makes 'good' spouse
- decision making
- why might marriage end? (Infidelity?)

**6. Children**

- how many want and why
- sex of children

For married participants:

- spouse's wants
- decision making with spouse?
- family influence or pressure?

## Interview Three

**Objectives:**

- *To understand how ideas and knowledge of sex are formed*
- *To explore sexual experiences and their contexts*
- *To determine understanding of 'safe' or 'healthy' sexuality*

**1. Introduction**

**2. Ranking exercise (see Appendix C)**

**3. Learning about sex**

- how, from whom and what learnt
- family communication about sex

**4. Sexual practice**

Sexual experience:

- first sexual experience
- other experiences
- motivations
- communication with partner over sex
- context of sexual behaviour
- any protection used
- feelings/emotions

NO sexual experience:

- motivations
- communication over sex
- future plans?
- masturbation
- friends' experiences

**5. 'Healthy sexuality' and safer sex**

- important factors for a 'healthy sexuality'
- evaluation of own sexuality in terms of healthy or 'good'
- pleasure
- knowledge of STIs, HIV/AIDS and contraception
- perception of risk of self and others
- contraception use
- communication with partner, family, friends

## *A.2 Interview for 'Peripheral' Informants*

**Objectives:**
- *To explore life history – main events*
- *To hear story of marriage or why unmarried*
- *To understand perceptions of how marriage/relationships have (if) changed*

If applicable:
- *To explore attitudes to son/daughter's relationships and sexuality*

**1. Introduction**

**2. Family and living circumstances**

- family composition
- religion/caste/social background
- family abroad
- education/job

**3. Marriage**

- how met and chose spouse
- description of spouse
- marriage ceremony
- life with spouse
- how spend time now with spouse
- what makes 'good' spouse
- decision making – children and fertility regulation?
- why might marriage end?
- feelings/emotions associated with marriage
- infidelity

**4. Marriage of young people / children**

- how experience is different – if different?
- hopes for son/daughter or grandchildren relationship
- pre-marriage relationships?
- What advice do you give your daughter/son for their marriage?

## *A.3 Focus Group Discussion Schedule*

1. **Introduction**

    - Confidentiality
    - Anonymity
    - Recording
    - Taking notes
    - Project
    - Freedom to leave or not answer
    - Don't have to tell anything about personal experience

2. **Icebreakers!**

3. **Relationships before marriage**

A story about Shilpa and Vikram…

Shilpa is a 22 year old science student at MSU Baroda. She is a Brahman from Surat, living in the university women's hostel. She doesn't smoke or drink, eats vegetarian food only and has never had a boyfriend.

Vikram is 26 years old and works in a call centre. He is a Patel from Baroda and lives at home with his family. He has one younger sister and one younger brother. He smokes but he doesn't drink. He has had a girlfriend for two years but they broke up when her family moved to Delhi.

Shilpa is good friends with Vikram's younger sister, Meena. She meets Vikram when she calls over to Meena's house. A few days later Vikram tells her that he has fallen in love with her at first sight.

**********

- *If Shilpa likes Vikram, what does she do?*
- *Do you think there is such a thing as 'love at first sight'?*
- *If it were Shilpa that had fallen in love with Vikram, would she have told him?*

**********

After some time, Vikram and Shilpa start going out together secretly. Nobody knows except Meena and Shilpa's older female cousin, Krupa. After a few months they start sleeping together and Shilpa becomes pregnant.

**********

- *What do they do now?*
- *Do you think this is realistic? Do you know any couples who this has happened to? (Without mentioning any names!)*
- *In the story, Shilpa and Vikram start sleeping together after a few months, do you think a couple would wait this long or longer or not sleep together at all? (Depends on what??)*
- *Shilpa and Vikram did not use any protection when they slept together – why not?*

**********

Before Shilpa and Vikram have decided what to do, she has a miscarriage and loses the baby. At the same time, her parents decide to arrange a marriage for her. She tells them about Vikram but they refuse to allow her to marry him.

**********

- *What do Shilpa and Vikram do now?*
- *Would the story have been different in the UK?*

**4. Discussion points on Marriage**

- Make up bio data of ideal spouse from your perspective and from parents perspective.

- What about marrying an NRI? A foreigner?

- If you discovered your friend's husband was having an affair, what would you do?

- If you discovered that your spouse was having an affair, what would you do?

- What is a successful marriage?

# Appendix B: Recruitment and Consent Materials

### *B.1 Recruitment Survey*

Survey about young people in Baroda

This is a survey about the lives of young people in Baroda. The researcher, Katherine, is a student in London who is doing this work as part of her PhD. Anything you write in this survey or tell Katherine or her assistant Amit will be completely confidential. You are not required to give your name or any contact details.

Your time and honesty is appreciated.

## 1. Information about you

*Please circle answer:*

**1a. Age**

Under 16 17-19 20-24 25-29 30-35 Over 35

**1b. Sex**

Female Male

**1c. Religion**

Hindu Muslim Jain Christian Sikh Other (Please write)

**1d. Where you were born?**

Gujarat Maharastra Punjab Other Indian State NRI Non-Indian

**1e. Mother's state of origin**

Gujarat Maharastra Punjab Other Indian State NRI Non-Indian

**1f. Father's state of origin**

Gujarat Maharastra Punjab Other Indian State NRI Non-Indian

**1g. Relationship status**

Married Engaged Divorced In relationship Single

**1h. Where do you live?**

With family Hostel Paying Guest house With wife and parents-in-law

Alone with wife/husband Alone or with friends in apartment

Other (please write)

**1i. Do you have your own transport?**

Yes, car Yes, motorbike Yes, scooter No

**1j. Languages speak (please number in order of preference)**

Gujarati

Hindi

English

Other (please write)

# 2. Pastimes

**2a. What do you do for enjoyment? (You can circle more than one)**

Play sport

Go to cinema

Go to parties

Read

Watch TV

Other (please write)

**2b. Where do you meet your friends? (You can circle more than one)**

Chai stall

Café Coffee Day (or similar)

At my or their house

Mall

Kulfi House

Go for a drive

Restaurant

Park

College

Other (please write)

2c. Please list three of your favourite movies from the last 5 years:

1.

2.

3.

2d. Please list three of your favourite books:

1.

2.

3.

2e. Do you read newspapers or magazines?

Yes No

If YES, please list:

2f. Do you go to 'farmhouse parties'?

Often Sometimes Never

2g. Have you ever drunk alcohol?

Yes No

2h. Have you ever smoked?

Yes No

# 3. Connections with abroad

3a. Do you have any relations living abroad?

Yes No

**If YES:**

Where do they live? Please circle (more than one is possible)

USA UK Canada East Africa

Other (please write):

AND How long have they been living there?

Less than 10 years 10-20 years More than 20 years

3b. Have you ever been abroad?

Yes No

If YES, please write which countries:

3e. Would you like to live abroad in the future?

Yes No

If YES, please write which country or countries:

Thank you for taking the time to do this survey, it is much appreciated.

- - - -

***B.2 Information Leaflet***

# Information Sheet for Participants

**An exploration of relationship ideals and experiences amongst young Indian people in the UK and India**

**Hi. My name is Katherine Twamley and I would very much like your help with a research study I am conducting. This sheet will give you basic information about the study.**

**Q. Who is Katherine Twamley?**

**A.** I'm a PhD student from City University in London. I'm doing this research project as part of my postgraduate studies, assisted by my supervisors.

**Q. What is the purpose of the study?**

**A.** To find out about your views and experiences of relationships such as having a boy/girlfriend or views on marriage, so as to understand the choices that young Indian people make in their relationships. What young people from London say will be compared with what young people in India say (that is part of the same project) and for this reason I have chosen to focus on Indians of Gujarati origin so that I can compare like with like (otherwise I'd have to travel all over India to compare Tamils with Tamils, Punjabis with Punjabis etc.).

Very little research has been done with young Indian people in the UK and even less comparing young Indians in the UK with young Indians in India. This is of interest so that we can see what affects migration have on relationships and

marriage which in turn have implications for population trends. By having a greater understanding of relationships, this study may also help us to identify needs or information gaps in reproductive health.

**Q. What would you have to do?**

**A.** If you choose to take part you will be asked to attend three or four interviews with Katherine. The number depends on topics covered in each interview session, each interview shouldn't last more than an hour.

The interviews will be about your experiences of growing up in England or India as well as your views and/or experiences of friendship, having a girl/boyfriend, or husband/wife, views and experiences of sex and intimacy, and your hopes for the future.

In addition to the interviews, you may be asked if you would like to participate in a group discussion with your friends or other participants. The interviews or discussion will be arranged at a convenient time and location for you. If you are uncomfortable talking in English, a translator, or bilingual researcher will assist. Katherine has some Gujarati; please feel free to practice with her!

During interviews Katherine shall record and take notes, however, everything you say will be kept confidential (see below) and if at any time you do not want to continue or discuss a particular topic, you are always free to stop the discussion or interview. Katherine will also be undertaking 'observation' as a means to understand the Gujarati community and the context in which you live. If she is around when you wish to be alone, or you do not want something you do or say to be recorded, she will leave immediately. You can choose to partake in interviews but not observation or vice versa.

**Q. Will my taking part be kept confidential?**

**A.** Yes. Recordings and notes taken will only be made available to members of the research team – that is Katherine (me!) and her supervisors at the university. For any publications arising from the study, she will ask you to choose a pseudonym (fake name) to disguise your identity so that it will not be possible for others to know what you have said. The study is being conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines from the university.

**Q. Is anyone else being interviewed?**

**A.** Yes. Approximately 30 young people (aged 20-30 years) of Gujarati origin will be interviewed – 15 in London and 15 in India. Some 'key members' of the community may also be interviewed, such as health care professionals, teachers, priests or parents. Nothing you say will be discussed with them.

**Q. What happens after the study?**

**A.** Katherine will gather together all the information from the different interviews and write a very long thesis as part of her examination for her PhD. She hopes to submit this thesis by October 2009 and once published it will be available in the City University library.

She also intends to write articles for mostly academic magazines and present the findings at appropriate conferences.

Finally, Katherine will hold an event at the end of the research for all participants (that is you if you participate!) where she will give a presentation summarising the findings. This will give you a chance to feedback your views on the research and her findings. Alternatively, she will send you a summary of the findings.

**Q. What happens next?**

**A.** If you have decided that you would like to take part, then please contact Katherine at the email address or telephone number below. She will contact you

soon to arrange a convenient time and venue for an interview or first meeting when you will have a chance to ask more questions about the study and decide if you would like to take part.

If you have decided that you would NOT like to take part, Katherine would welcome your thoughts on why you do not wish to participate, otherwise, there is no need to do anything further.

Thank you for taking the time to read this!

For more information about the project or if you would like to take part, please contact:

Katherine Twamley
City University
Tel. 020 7040 5314
katherine.twamley.1@city.ac.uk
You can also reach me on facebook!
or
to speak to my supervisor at City University
contact Dr. Anthony Pryce
apryce@city.ac.uk

### *B.3 Consent Form*

**Study Title: An exploration of relationship ideals and experiences of young Indian people in the UK and India.**

Respondent Name:

Location of Interview:

**Please sign below if you agree with the following statements:**

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information leaflet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I know what my part in the study will be and I know how long it will take.
3. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time.
4. I understand that personal information is strictly confidential: I know the only people who may see information about my part in the study are the members of the research team i.e. the student and her supervisors.
5. I understand that no information that could lead to the identification of me will be disclosed in any reports on the project, or to any other party. No identifiable personal data will be published and a pseudonym will be used in place of my real name in all publications.
6. I understand that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed for information which I might disclose in group discussions.
7. I have been informed that what I say will be recorded digitally or in notes.
8. I agree to take part in the above study.

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of Respondent: | Name of Researcher: |
| Date: | Date: |
| Signature: | Signature: |

For any further information about the study, please contact:

Katherine Twamley (020 7040 5314)

Thank you!

# Appendix C: Ranking Exercise and Results

## *C.1 Ranking Exercise*

**Please rank the following items in order of importance when thinking about a (future) spouse. 1 is most important, 10 least important.**

Good-looking

Education

Intelligent

Settled in job

Virginity

Family Wealth

Cooking Ability

Family Background

Kind

Broadminded

Any others you think should be included:

## *C.2 Ranking Tables*

| Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Nilesh** | Virginity | Kind | Family background | Education | Broad-minded | Good - looking | Intelligent | Settled in job | Cooking Ability | Family Wealth |
| **Aditya** | Education | Intelligent | Kind | Broad-minded | Good-looking | Family background | Cooking Ability | Family Wealth | Settled in job | Virginity |
| **Tarun** | Virginity | Family background | Education | Good-looking | Kind | Cooking Ability | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Family Wealth | Settled in job |
| **Toni** | Education | Intelligent | Family background | Broad-minded | Good-looking | Kind | Cooking Ability | Settled in job | Virginity | Family Wealth |
| **Krishna** | Virginity | Good-looking | Kind | Family background | Broad-minded | Education | Cooking Ability | Intelligent | Settled in job | Family Wealth |
| **Durish** | Virginity | Broad-minded | Kind | Education | Settled in job | Ambitious | Good-Looking | Family background | Cooking Ability | Fair |
| **Hiren** | Intelligent | Education | Family background | Kind | Good-Looking | Virginity | Cook Ability | Broad-minded | Settled in job | Family Wealth |
| **Rahul** | Virginity | Kind | Family background | Cook Ability | Broad-minded | Good-Looking | Intelligent | Education | Settled in job | Family Wealth |
| **Seeta** | Broad-minded | Kind | Settled in job | Education | Family background | Good-Looking | Intelligent | Virginity | Family Wealth | Cooking Ability |
| **Kareena*** | Kind | Intelligent | | | | | | | | |
| **Muktha** | Kind | Settled in job | Education | Family background | Good-looking | Virginity | Intelligent | Broad-minded | Family Wealth | Cooking Ability |
| **Geet** | Family background | Education | Virginity | Intelligent | Kind | Settled in job | Broad-minded | Family Wealth | Good Looking | Cooking Ability |
| **Priya** | Broad-minded | Education | Family background | Kind | Intelligent | Virginity | Settled in job | Good-Looking | Family Wealth | Cooking Ability |
| **Swati** | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Settled in job | Education | Family background | Good-Looking | Kind | Virginity | Family Wealth | Cooking Ability |
| **Nirali*** | Education | Settled in job | Family background | Broad-minded | | | | | | |
| **Rekha** | Virginity | Intelligent | Education | Kind | Settled in job | Family background | Broad-minded | Cook Ability | Family Wealth | Good-Looking |

*Kareena and Nirali only ranked those traits which they deemed important
Lena and Jambli did not complete this exercise

**Table C2.1 Ranking by informants in Baroda**

| Name | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pretak** | Kind | Broad-minded | Education | Intelligent | Family Background | Good-looking | Cook Ability | Settled in job | Family Wealth | Virginity |
| **Naveen** | Kind | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Good-looking | Education | Settled in job | Family Background | Cooking Ability | Family Wealth | Virginity |
| **Yogesh** | Virginity | Good-looking | Kind | Intelligent | Broad-minded | Education | Family Background | Cooking Ability | Settled in job | Family Wealth |
| **Nihal** | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Kind | Good-looking | Education | Cooking Ability | Family Background | Family Wealth | Settled in job | Virginity |
| **Mahendra** | Broad-minded | Kind | Intelligent | Good-looking | Cooking Ability | Education | Family Background | Family Wealth | Virginity | Settled in job |
| **Sohan** | Intelligent | Good Looking | Broad-minded | Education | Kind | Family Background | Family Wealth | Virginity | Settled in job | Cooking Ability |
| **Ameera** | Kind | Intelligent | Education | Settled in job | Good-looking | Broad-minded | Virginity | Cooking Ability | Family Back-ground | Family Wealth |
| **Lona** | Kind | Good-looking | Settled in job | Education | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Family Background | Family Wealth | Cooking Ability | Virginity |
| **Rama** | Kind | Broad-minded | Intelligent | Education | Settled in job | Good-looking | Cooking Ability | Family Background | Family Wealth | Virginity |
| **Renu** | Intelligent | Family Background | Broad-minded | Education | Kind | Good-looking | Settled in job | Cooking Ability | Family Wealth | Virginity |

Darsha and Prity never completed this exercise.

**Table C2.2 Ranking by informants in London**

# Appendix D: 'The Matchmaker' Film

In the third year of my doctoral programme I made a short ethnographic film on a London-based Gujarati matchmaker, Jetalbhai.[152] Here I give a brief description of the background of this film, and invite the reader to visit the website below in order to view 'The Matchmaker'.

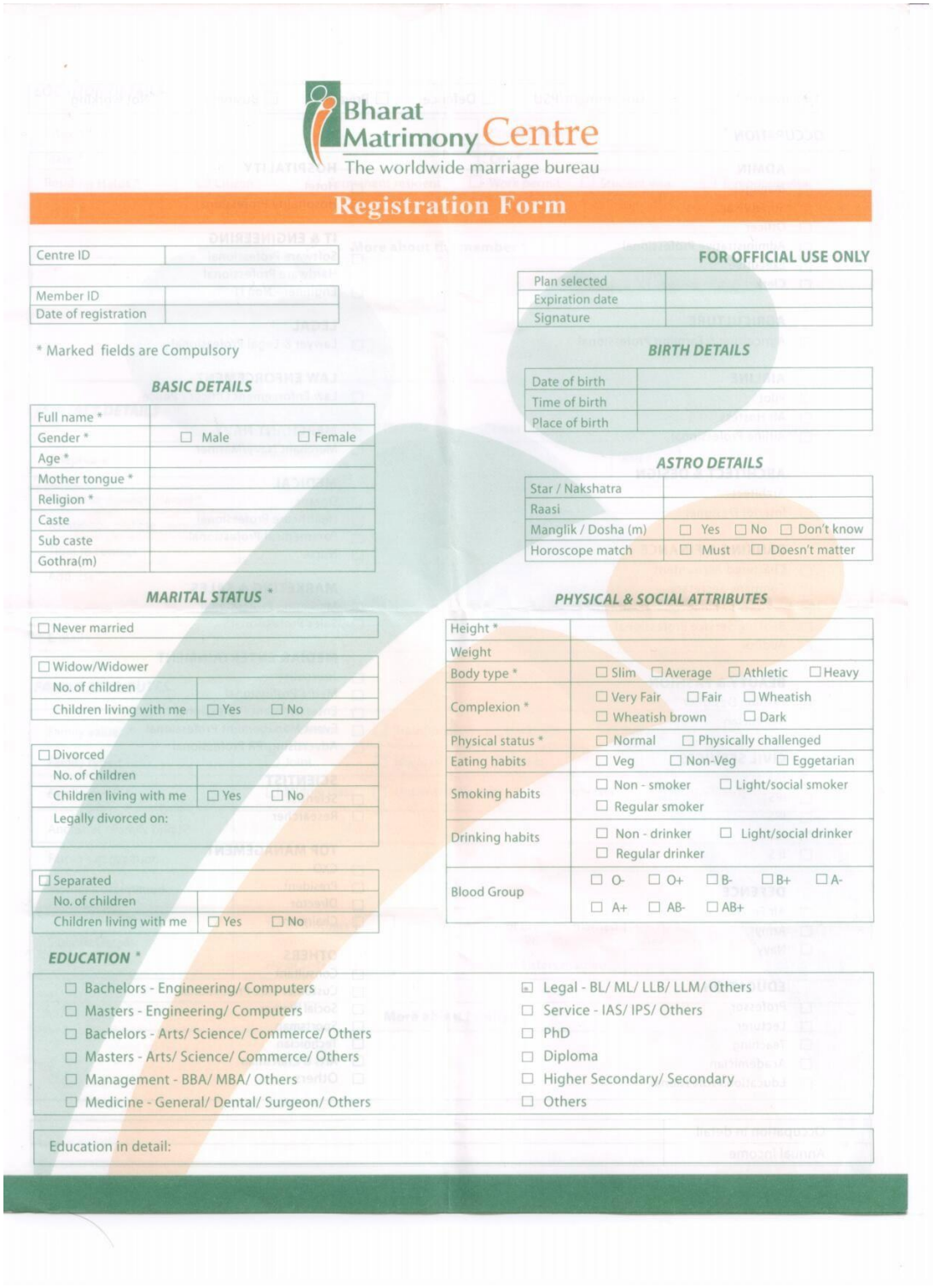
Jetalbhai has been living in England for over 40 years. He came to London through East Africa with his newly married wife and settled in a north London suburb popular with Gujaratis. After having some difficulty in arranging a husband for his first daughter, he decided to start a small matchmaking service. At first he introduced family friends to one another, but interest grew in his service and after his retirement he devoted himself full time to matchmaking. In the film the viewer will see Jetalbhai in his office – a purpose built structure in his back garden. Here he discusses both the process of matchmaking and his philosophy on relationships and life.

Film link: www.dailymotion.com/video/xdvke3_matchmaker-by-katherine-twamley_people

[152] Jetalbhai gave permission for his real name to be used in the film, and permission for the use of client materials and photographs.

# Appendix E: Matrimonial & Dating Agency Materials

## *E.1 Example of Matrimonial Website Registration Form, India*



Bharat Matrimony Centre
The worldwide marriage bureau

**Registration Form**

| | |
|---|---|
| Centre ID | |
| Member ID | |
| Date of registration | |

**FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY**

| | |
|---|---|
| Plan selected | |
| Expiration date | |
| Signature | |

* Marked fields are Compulsory

**BASIC DETAILS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Full name * | |
| Gender * | ☐ Male ☐ Female |
| Age * | |
| Mother tongue * | |
| Religion * | |
| Caste | |
| Sub caste | |
| Gothra(m) | |

**BIRTH DETAILS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Date of birth | |
| Time of birth | |
| Place of birth | |

**ASTRO DETAILS**

| | |
|---|---|
| Star / Nakshatra | |
| Raasi | |
| Manglik / Dosha (m) | ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know |
| Horoscope match | ☐ Must ☐ Doesn't matter |

**MARITAL STATUS ***

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ☐ Never married | | |
| ☐ Widow/Widower | | |
| No. of children | | |
| Children living with me | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| ☐ Divorced | | |
| No. of children | | |
| Children living with me | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |
| Legally divorced on: | | |
| ☐ Separated | | |
| No. of children | | |
| Children living with me | ☐ Yes | ☐ No |

**PHYSICAL & SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES**

| | |
|---|---|
| Height * | |
| Weight | |
| Body type * | ☐ Slim ☐ Average ☐ Athletic ☐ Heavy |
| Complexion * | ☐ Very Fair ☐ Fair ☐ Wheatish ☐ Wheatish brown ☐ Dark |
| Physical status * | ☐ Normal ☐ Physically challenged |
| Eating habits | ☐ Veg ☐ Non-Veg ☐ Eggetarian |
| Smoking habits | ☐ Non - smoker ☐ Light/social smoker ☐ Regular smoker |
| Drinking habits | ☐ Non - drinker ☐ Light/social drinker ☐ Regular drinker |
| Blood Group | ☐ O- ☐ O+ ☐ B- ☐ B+ ☐ A- ☐ A+ ☐ AB- ☐ AB+ |

**EDUCATION ***

| | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Bachelors - Engineering/ Computers | ☐ Legal - BL/ ML/ LLB/ LLM/ Others |
| ☐ Masters - Engineering/ Computers | ☐ Service - IAS/ IPS/ Others |
| ☐ Bachelors - Arts/ Science/ Commerce/ Others | ☐ PhD |
| ☐ Masters - Arts/ Science/ Commerce/ Others | ☐ Diploma |
| ☐ Management - BBA/ MBA/ Others | ☐ Higher Secondary/ Secondary |
| ☐ Medicine - General/ Dental/ Surgeon/ Others | ☐ Others |

Education in detail:

| Employed in * | ☐ Government/PSU | ☐ Defence | ☐ Private | ☐ Business | ☐ Not working |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

***OCCUPATION*** *

**ADMIN**
- ☐ Manager
- ☐ Supervisor
- ☐ Officer
- ☐ Administrative Professional
- ☐ Executive
- ☐ Clerk

**AGRICULTURE**
- ☐ Agriculture & Farming Professional

**AIRLINE**
- ☐ Pilot
- ☐ Air Hostess
- ☐ Airline Professional

**ARCHITECT & DESIGN**
- ☐ Architect
- ☐ Interior Designer

**BANKING & FINANCE**
- ☐ Chartered Accountant
- ☐ Company Secretary
- ☐ Accounts / Finance Professional
- ☐ Banking Service Professional
- ☐ Auditor

**BEAUTY & FASHION**
- ☐ Fashion Designer
- ☐ Beautician

**CIVIL SERVICES**
- ☐ IAS
- ☐ IPS
- ☐ IRS
- ☐ IES
- ☐ IFS

**DEFENCE**
- ☐ Air Force
- ☐ Army
- ☐ Navy

**EDUCATION**
- ☐ Professor
- ☐ Lecturer
- ☐ Teaching
- ☐ Academician
- ☐ Education Professional

**HOSPITALITY**
- ☐ Hotel
- ☐ Hospitality Professional

**IT & ENGINEERING**
- ☐ Software Professional
- ☐ Hardware Professional
- ☐ Engineer - Non IT

**LEGAL**
- ☐ Lawyer & Legal Professional

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**
- ☐ Law Enforcement Officer / Police

**MERCHANT NAVY**
- ☐ Merchant Navy/Mariner

**MEDICAL**
- ☐ Doctor
- ☐ Healthcare Professional
- ☐ Paramedical Professional
- ☐ Nurse

**MARKETING & SALES**
- ☐ Marketing Professional
- ☐ Sales Professional

**MEDIA& ENTERTAINMENT**
- ☐ Journalist
- ☐ Media Professional
- ☐ Entertainment Professional
- ☐ Event Management Professional
- ☐ Advertising/PR Professional

**SCIENTIST**
- ☐ Scientist
- ☐ Researcher

**TOP MANAGEMENT**
- ☐ CXO
- ☐ President
- ☐ Director
- ☐ Chairman

**OTHERS**
- ☐ Consultant
- ☐ Customer Care Professional
- ☐ Social Worker
- ☐ Sportsman
- ☐ Technician
- ☐ Arts & Craftsman
- ☐ Others

| Occupation in detail | |
|---|---|
| Annual Income | |

## LOCATION DETAILS

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Citizenship * | | Country living * | |
| State * | | City * | |
| Residing status * | ☐ Citizen ☐ Permanent resident ☐ Work permit ☐ Student visa ☐ Temporary visa | | |

| More about the member * |
|---|
| |

## CONTACT DETAILS

| | Country code | Area / STD code | Phone number | | Mobile Number |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Telephone * | | | | and / or | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Person to contact (Name) * | |
| Relationship to the member * | |
| Time to contact * | |
| Address * | |
| E-mail : | |

## FAMILY ATTRIBUTES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Family values * | ☐ Orthodox ☐ Traditional ☐ Moderate ☐ Liberal | |
| Family type * | ☐ Joint ☐ Nuclear ☐ Others | |
| Family status * | ☐ Middle class ☐ Upper middle class ☐ Highclass ☐ Rich/Affluent | |
| Ancestral / Family origin | | |
| Father's occupation | | |
| Mother's occupation | | |
| Siblings Details: | No of Brothers | No of Brothers married |
| | No of Sisters | No of Sisters married |

| More about family |
|---|
| |

## PARTNER PREFERENCE

(Partner preference is optional. However, we recommend you to provide this information for better results.)

### Primary Preference

Age From ---------- To ----------

Marital status ☐ Any ☐ Never Married ☐ Widow/Widower ☐ Divorcee ☐ Separated

Height From --------- To ----------

Mother tongue _____

### Socio-Religious Preference

Religion _____

Caste _____

Manglik /Dosha(m) ☐ Doesn't matter ☐ No ☐ Yes

Eating habits ☐ Doesn't matter ☐ Veg ☐ Non-Veg ☐ Eggetarian

### Educational Preference

Education _____

### Location Preference

Citizenship _____

Country living in _____

Residing State _____

### More about Prefered Partner

| | |
|---|---|
| Profile registered by * | ☐ Parents ☐ Relative ☐ Sibling ☐ Friend ☐ Self ☐ Others |
| Referred by * | ☐ Newspaper ☐ Television ☐ Friend / Relative ☐ Others |
| Declaration | I hereby declare that all the above information given by me /us are true and correct to my / our knowledge. I have read and understood the terms and conditions mentioned herein, and agree to abide by them. |
| Date : | Signature: |

### Terms & Condition:

By registering at BharatMatrimony Centre, you explicitly understand and agree that: The minimum age for registering is 18 years for women and 21 years for men. You have gone through the Terms and Conditions and agree to be bound by them. Membership is only for personal use. It is not to be assigned, authorized, transferred or licensed so as to be used by any other person/entity. Each package has validity in terms of time period and/or number of profiles purchased, which ever occurs earlier. However, a member can renew the membership and avail a special discount. Please carry your member ID card to any BMC all across, in order to access your account. (Incase of loss of member ID card, please report to your centre of registration or Corporate Office immediately. BMC will not assume any liability arising out of lost/stolen ID card).You may terminate your membership at any time by stating the reason in writing to BMC. In the event you terminate the membership, no refund will be made.

BharatMatrimony Centre will maintain confidentiality of all personal information [other than that meant for posting or transmission or print out to other BharatMatrimony members] furnished by members. However, BMC may divulge such information if required by law. Members are advised to make appropriate/thorough enquiries before acting upon any matrimony ID. BMC does not vouch for or subscribe to the claims and representations made by other members of BMC regarding particulars of status, age, income, character etc. Please check with our Front Office Executive on discount for physically challenged person. The amount once paid, against any of the packages, is not refundable. Any dispute shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of courts in Chennai only.

## *E.2 Matrimonial Classified Advertisements from India*

Taken from the Sunday Times (Times of India), June 10th 2007

MATRIMONIALS

WANTED BRIDES

BY LANGUAGE

GUJARATI

**BE/MBA/MCA Professionally Qualified Beautiful Girl**

For Fair Smart & Handsome Gujrati Boy/Vaishnav Vaniya/28/177/BE MBA/ 10 Lacs P.A./ Project Manager in Infosys, Hyderabad rrshah_2007@rediffmail.com Send BHP. Write Box No. LUC 519021 K Times of India, Lucknow-226001

**ALLIANCE** invited for Kapol Vaishnav Boy, 1981 / 5'8", US Citizen, Well Settled in New Jersey doing Medical Residency from parents of well educated, beautiful, Slim Gujarati Girl, willing to settle in US. Contact : 9833222301. Fax : 22615409 Email : krutiassociates@rediffmail.com

**PROPSALS** invitd parnts of educatd culturd veg helthy homly Guj girls 22-24 for 26/ 175 M.Sc. fair handsom Kutchhi Lohana boy erns 3.1 lac P.A. Send BP to Box No. BAR 474815K Times of India, Baroda-390005

BY CASTE

BRAHMIN

**MAITHIL** Brahmin Bhardwaj V.Fair MBA 30/5'10" Sr. Mngr. Bank PSU (Mumbai), Father Gz. Officer seeks qlfd./wkg. b'ful Maithil girl. Email: skjha23@yahoo.com

**BHUMIHAR** 29/5'10" Shandilya H'some S/W Engr in US own house seeks Engr/-Doctor Girl only 09350841455, E:m_matri@rediffmail.com

**B'FUL** qlfd Dr/Engr/IT for IIT Comp Sc. B.Tech MS US Br boy 31/5'6". Caste no bar. Email: allianceak@rediffmail.com Mob:9955373024

**BHUMIHAR** (Shandlya) boy 32/5'9" well settled businessman in Mum seeks 5'4"+, b'ful, educated girl Ph 062122-72239,09979023419,9820290449

**MATCH** 4 Mglk Sary Uparin Br. boy 28/5'8" fair h'some well settled in US wkg. as an Engg -Java Programmer with a S/W Co. Cont: 9811722207 or bhp saryuparin@yahoo.com

**SEEKING** Slim, Beautiful, Fair, Graduate, Working Brahmin Girl for H'SOME, Fair, Flight Lieutenant in Indian Airforce. 27/5'7". Cont: 0326 - 2221041, 2221042

**ALLIANCE** Invited 4 KKB 28/5'11"/ BE MBA, H'some fair boy working in MNC. Parents of B'ful Homely well qualified girl cont with BHP Box No. DEL 211944R Times of India, New Delhi - 110002

**SM** 4 Very Handsome NI BR Boy 35/5'11"/M.Tech/MBA Working in Mu'bai Seeks Beautiful Highly Qualified Girl Working In Mu'bai Send Photo Biodata Con : 28031796 Write Box.No DEL X225242C Times of India, New Delhi-110002

**KKB** BE/MBA IIM(C), 27/ 177, Working in MNC Bank in Delhi. Wants Prof. Qlfd. Brahmin Girl. Contact with BHP Write Box No DEL 212096C Times of India, New Delhi-02

**V'HANDSOME** Army Officer seeks beautiful, slim, convent educated girl. Send email: preeti_goswami@hotmail.com Ph.: 09335590958, 0522-2395284

**JANGID** Br h'some smart boys Dec 75,5'10" BDS own Clinic & Jan 77,5'8" MBA Bank Manager in Dubai Belonging to Highly Edu Affluent Fmly seek B'ful Prof Qlfd Girls from status fmly.Caste No Bar. Ph:9811443191. Send BHP to godblessyou@yahoo.com

**IIT** IIM V'Handsome 5'10"/ 27 yrs Bank Job status family Boy needs tall gorl Dr Engr MBA girl of decent family. Email :sai1651@yahoo.com, Mobile:09993219050

**GB** 28/6' BE MBA h'some frm status fly seeks b'ful attrac tive prof qlfd girl frm rptd fly. Mob 09423581406. Write Box No. PUN 806823C The Times Of India, Pune - 411004

**SUITABLE** Beautiful match for Handsome NI Brahmin Boy of Good family. 6/29 BE (Bom), MS (USA), Working USA. Email: tiwarip7@gmail.com

**BHUMIHAR** Parasar 27/ 5'10" Final yr Law only son Newspaper publication Business, income 6 fig. requires fair B'ful well educated girl./

**TALL,** Fair, Gracious, Prof. Qlfd. working girl from cultd, status Brahmin family for 28/185cm fair, handsome MBA serving as Investment Banker with top MNC with high 7 Figures p.a. package. Father very Senior serving Officer. kindly send BHP to siddevmit@gmail.com or Write to Box No. DEL 211688R Times of India, New Delhi -02

GENERAL

COSMOPOLITAN

**KSHATRIY** 35 Luks 25, C. Rly, 23K smrt, 5'7" B.Sc., seek fair, slim, b'ful, qlfd., prefrnc wkg, Mum 9892172514. Cst no bar. k_35k@yahoo.com

**ALLIANCE** invited for Brahmin Status family NM Madhya , handsome young man 28/5'9" IITK, MBA,IIML associate with top US Consulting Co. NCR 24 Lakhs +, profnlly qlfd. pretty girl from status family only consideration. Caste No Bar. Pl contact with BHP-09839085677. Em:sasi_cl@rediffmail.com

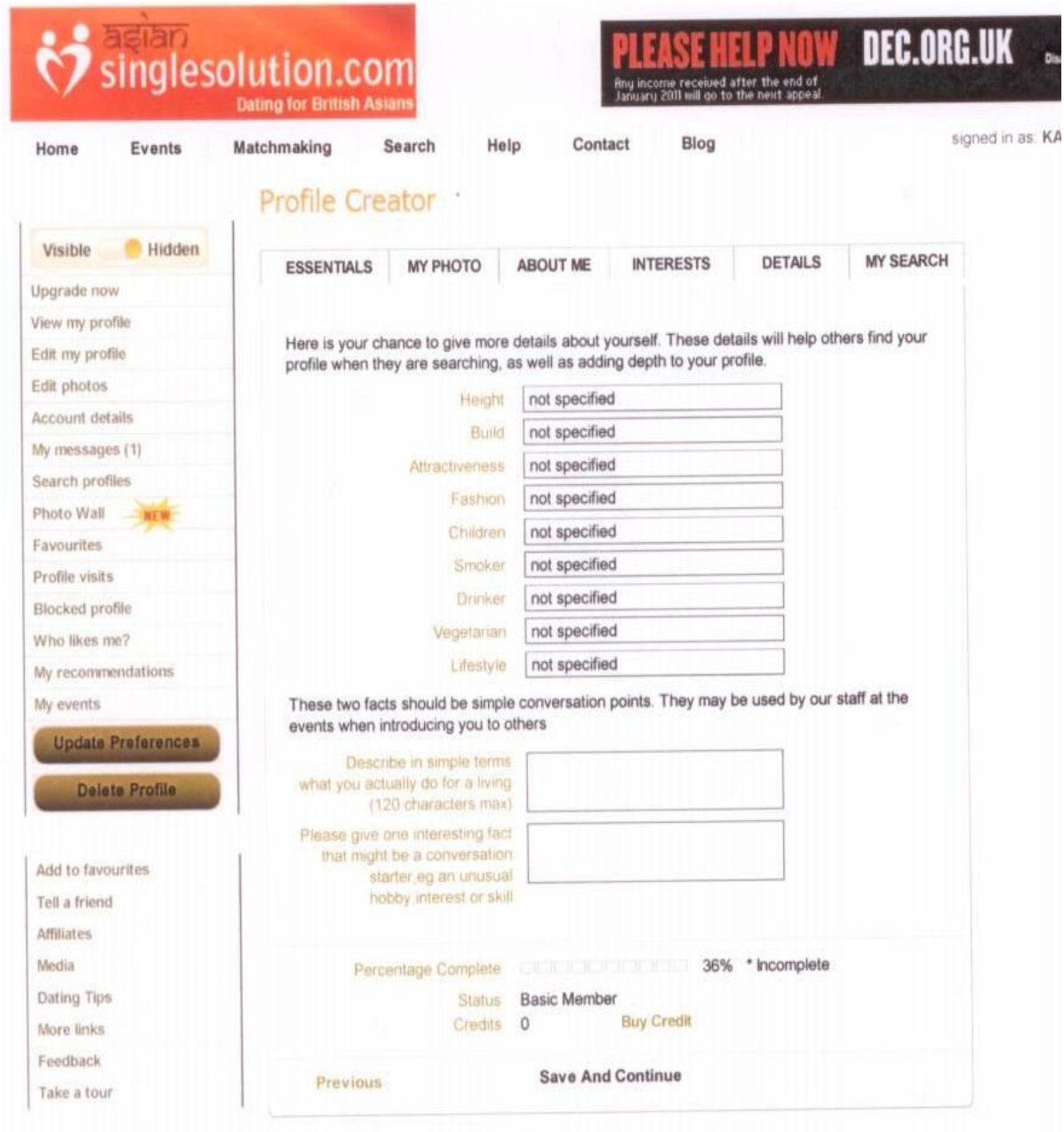
**PROFESSIONALLY** Qlfd b'ful girl for v/f h'some IIT MBA 26/5'10" from reputed family Mair Soni. Caste No bar. Send Email: sswr24@hotmail.com Mb:09414008762

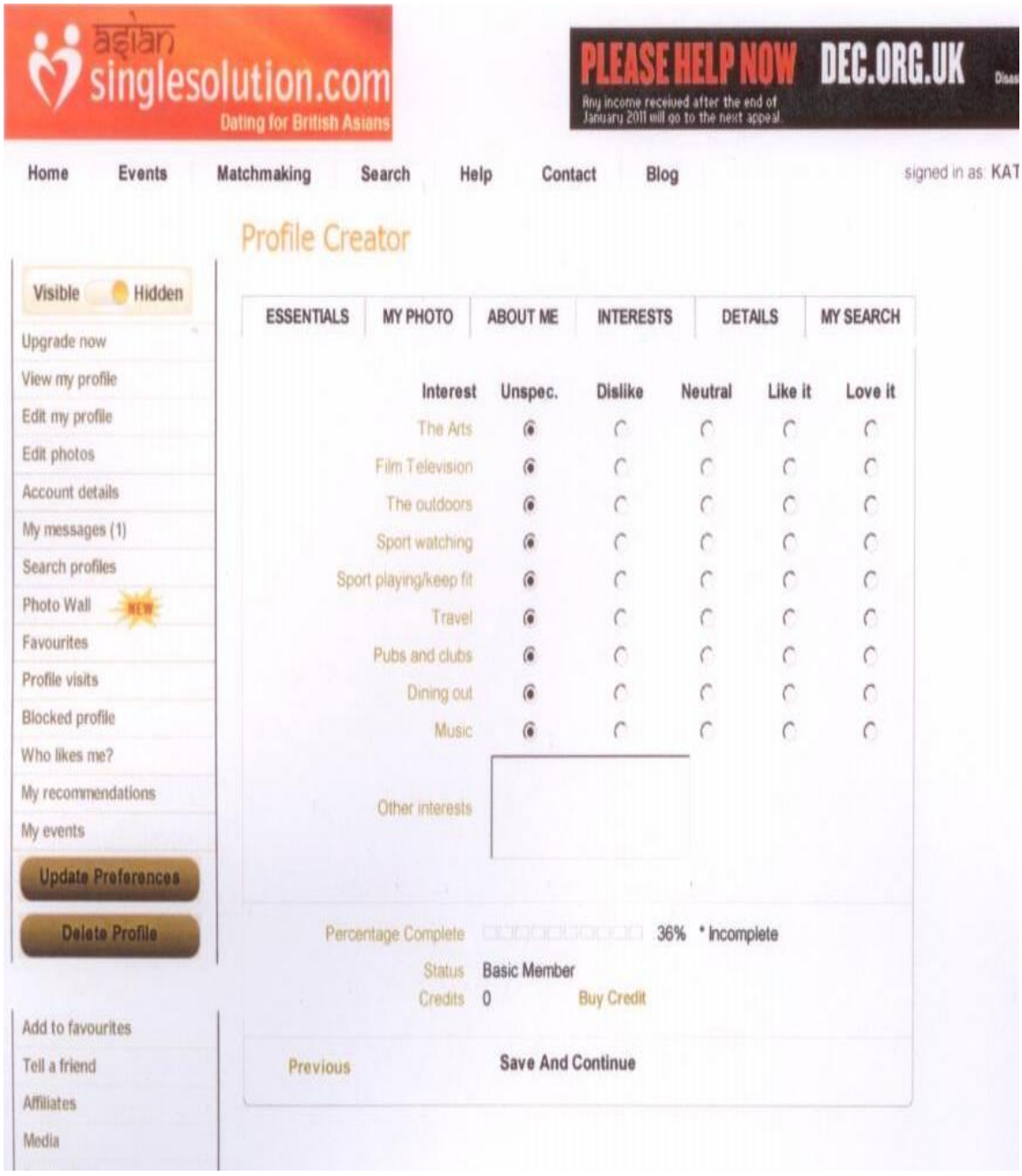
**HANDSOME** Telugu Kapu boy S/E wrkg. in USA 6'2"/ 29 yrs needs very fair, b'ful above 5'6" slim, educated girl with good family values. Caste no bar. Ph: 022-26240557 Email: kvkrao1@yahoo.com

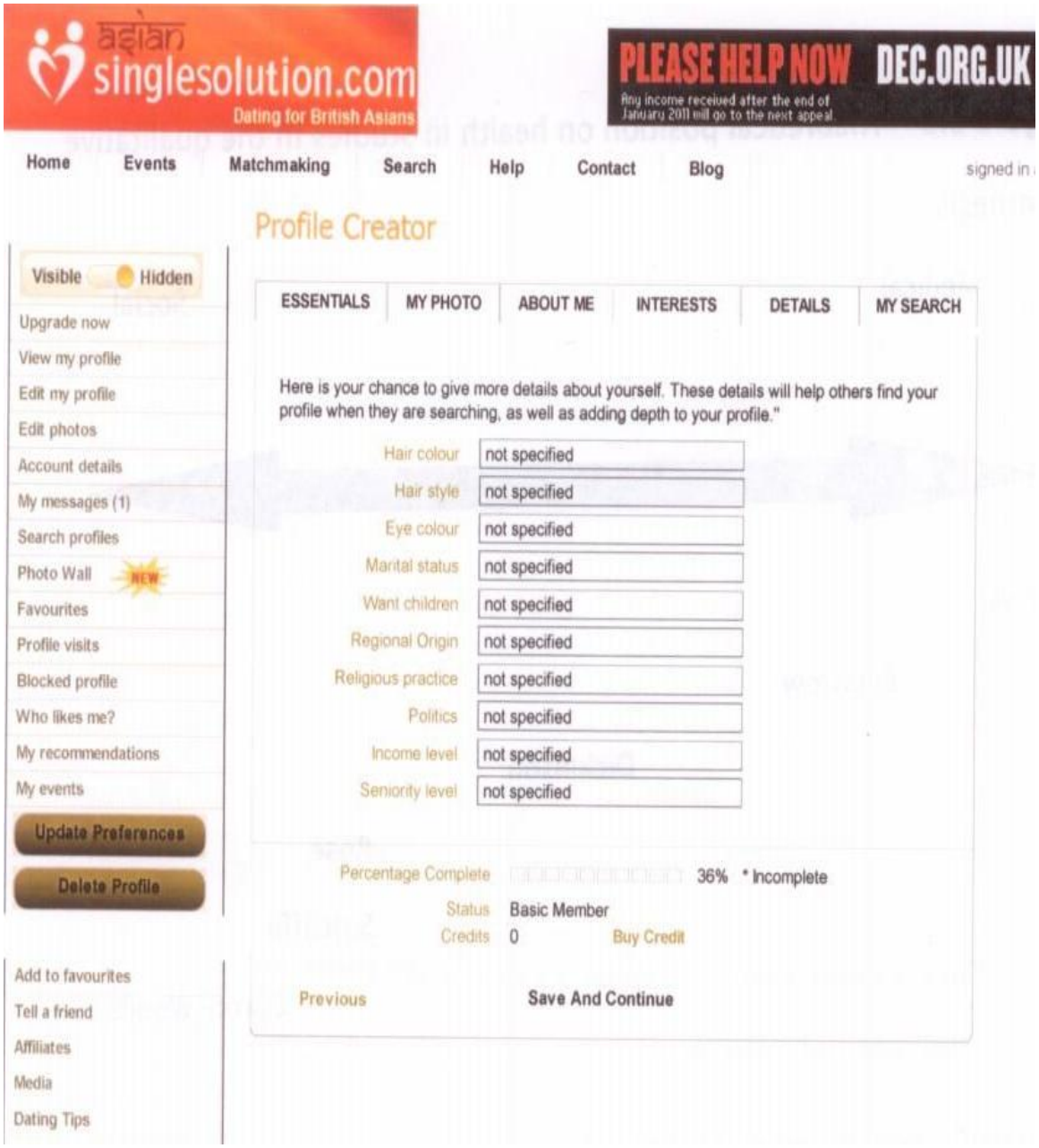
**US'** Set'd S.In. Hindu Parents seek Alnz for Boy Born Edu'd in US, 30 6'4" MD from Conv. Edu'd Girl to Settle in

### *E.3 Example of Online Dating Agency Registration Form, UK*

The following three pages are taken from the Asian Single Solutions website (www.asiansinglesolution.com). The website suggests that members fill in five pages: The 'Essentials' page asks for contact details, sex, and sexual preference. On the 'My Photo' page, members can upload three photos of themselves. The pages shown below are 'About Me', 'Interests' and 'Details'.




asian singlesolution.com
Dating for British Asians
PLEASE HELP NOW DEC.ORG.UK
Any income received after the end of January 2011 will go to the next appeal.
Home Events Matchmaking Search Help Contact Blog
signed in as: KAT
Profile Creator
Visible Hidden
Upgrade now
View my profile
Edit my profile
Edit photos
Account details
My messages (1)
Search profiles
Photo Wall NEW
Favourites
Profile visits
Blocked profile
Who likes me?
My recommendations
My events
Update Preferences
Delete Profile
Add to favourites
Tell a friend
Affiliates
Media
ESSENTIALS MY PHOTO ABOUT ME INTERESTS DETAILS MY SEARCH
Interest Unspec. Dislike Neutral Like it Love it
The Arts
Film Television
The outdoors
Sport watching
Sport playing/keep fit
Travel
Pubs and clubs
Dining out
Music
Other interests
Percentage Complete 36% * Incomplete
Status Basic Member
Credits 0 Buy Credit
Previous
Save And Continue


asian singlesolution.com
Dating for British Asians
PLEASE HELP NOW DEC.ORG.UK
Any income received after the end of January 2011 will go to the next appeal.
Home Events Matchmaking Search Help Contact Blog
signed in
Profile Creator
Visible Hidden
Upgrade now
View my profile
Edit my profile
Edit photos
Account details
My messages (1)
Search profiles
Photo Wall NEW
Favourites
Profile visits
Blocked profile
Who likes me?
My recommendations
My events
Update Preferences
Delete Profile
Add to favourites
Tell a friend
Affiliates
Media
Dating Tips
ESSENTIALS MY PHOTO ABOUT ME INTERESTS DETAILS MY SEARCH
Here is your chance to give more details about yourself. These details will help others find your profile when they are searching, as well as adding depth to your profile."
Hair colour not specified
Hair style not specified
Eye colour not specified
Marital status not specified
Want children not specified
Regional Origin not specified
Religious practice not specified
Politics not specified
Income level not specified
Seniority level not specified
Percentage Complete 36% * Incomplete
Status Basic Member
Credits 0 Buy Credit
Previous
Save And Continue

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