



Dating Diary of a Single Desi

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Everyday I hear stories of my girlfriends and the 'guys in their life.' Each day it's a new dramatic story of meeting Mr. Wrong, and how their parents are forcing them into a bhandhan. For the next few months, I'll be sharing a series of stories with you guys from my friends' perspectives about their dating tribulations. Today we meet Megha Shah and her incident with Mr. Baroda...

I am single and given the pressure I have coming from all parts of the society I live in, I am afraid a catastrophe will strike this world we live in if I don't get married soon!

Given the track record I have with the various dating/relationship disasters, I finally relented to my parents' wishes and signed up for an event called "GujjuMaitri" which is Gujarati speed dating. You must register to participate and for registration you need to send your headshot, 'bio-data' (a term I find hilarious for dating), and other relevant details about yourself.

Upon reaching "GujjuMaitri" you receive a huge fat book, which has pictures and information on EVERY guy & girl registered for the event (so much for privacy!) Earlier I was single and not many people knew; now even random strangers that I want to know nothing about know that I am SINGLE!

The event with kicked off with all of us lined up by the stage and introducing ourselves. Some of the guys were normal, and some others decided to get on stage with the microphone and say, "Aunties & uncles look out, I'm one hot guy looking for your hot daughter!" Come on guys – you are in a room full of people, one of those people is possibly someone you just may marry, a distinct possibility that her parents are also around – what possessed you to get on the stage and say something like that out loud?

Once everyone introduced himself or herself, we were asked to make a list of the top 10 guys (for the girls) that we'd like to meet. After submitting the list, we were asked to mingle with people while they put the "data" together in their systems – yes, they had computer software for this!

After the data was put together and we got our list of the 10 guys (for my example) we were asked to sit down with them –

let the speed dating begin. I went through my list and met with the guys; some seemed really nice, whereas others didn't present themselves in umm let's just say ... a good light!

Let's meet Mr. Baroda (yes that's his native town): cute, nice smile! Birthplace – Newark, NJ, Sun Sign – Cancer, Age – XX, Occupation – Pharmacist, Siblings – 1 older sister (married + 2 kids) and a younger brother (in college), Parents – married (father works for a major pharmaceutical company & mother is a homemaker).

We started talking and the conversation went something like this:

Me: So tell me a little bit about yourself?

Mr. Baroda: I was born & raised here; my parents have been living in the US for nearly 50 years now. I work for a major pharmacy chain and went to college locally. I've got an older sister and two cute nieces. I got a younger brother too. What about you? Me: Wow sounds cool, how old are your nieces? I bet you spoil them a lot! Well, I work for a pharmaceutical company. I am involved with marketing their products. I get to travel a lot and meet interesting people, so it's a lot of fun.

Mr. Baroda: Yeah, they are a year apart from each other, so they never like to share things, so whatever I get for one, I have to get for the other. They are 5 and 4 years old, cute little kids. (He then proceeds to pull out his wallet and inside are pictures of his nieces – seems like he's really attached to them.) So you do want to continue working after marriage?

Me: Aww, they are very cute! I have little cousins that I spoil a lot too, so I know how you feel. Work after marriage? Yeah of course, until my husband & I decide to settle down with our family, then I'll continue to work.

Mr. Baroda: Interesting; well, I think after a marriage, a woman doesn't need to work, she should just stay at home, cook, clean and take care of house-hold matters. Let's just say after that, the rest of the speed dating event went downhill! A guy, born & raised in the US, who has the mentality that a girl should merely stay home and tend to "household necessities," was not really making me want to find out what his views were about politics, world hunger, humanity or heck, even Bollywood for that matter! Old adage but so true! Never judge a book by its cover!

