

MODERN MARRIAGE

Young nurse willing to give 'arranged' nuptials a go — on her own terms

BY KIM BOLAN
VANCOUVER SUN

If you had asked Preet Bains a few years ago, she would have said she was totally against arranged marriage.

But now the 26-year-old Port Coquitlam nurse is willing to give it a shot, on her terms anyway.

"A few years ago, I would have said, 'No way, no, I am not going to have an arranged marriage.' But now arranged marriages have changed so much. They have got the introduction thing where you meet a few different people and you go on a couple of dates and from there, maybe it gets further," Bains said recently.

Traditional arranged marriages meant decisions would be made by extended family and without the input of the young people getting married.

But for many Indo-Canadians — particularly those who have been in the west for decades — a compromise tradition is evolving where family members simply help a young person meet potential suitors.

Bains said she would like to get married within the next couple of years, and realizes her extended family could be a great asset in finding someone compatible.

"Your parents will find somebody from a family that has been in the country long enough — they are in the same socio-economic status. They will look at all the different things and they will find the right person for you. And of course there are things that you have to tweak — like personality," she said.

Most of her Indo-Canadian girlfriends feel the same way — they want help to meet compatible young men interested in getting married. They like the idea of introductions, but would not favour rigid traditional arranged marriages.

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Preet Bains says many modern arranged marriages are more flexible than they used to be.

"I have had cousins who have had love marriages. But my close girlfriends are for the introduction kind of arranged marriages," said Bains, who put herself through Douglas College.

"I think because we are professionals and we have been in the dating scene long enough, we have the experience that it is really hard to find somebody that matches up with you every other way."

She doesn't see it as being any different than other cultures trying to matchmake — or dating services, for that matter.

Bains, who has dated men from different cultures, now feels the new style of arranged marriage can work. She wants compatibility in education level and interests, more than anything.

"There are a few different variables. There are people's families that have been here for a while and then there are new immigrants. So there is a little bit of difficulty matching people up that way," Bains said.

"With both myself and my friends, we have been born here and our way of thinking is very

westernized — hobbies, what we wear, what we do, is very different."

She has been introduced to a few young men, but has not yet met someone she wants to marry. But she has not given up on the process.

"Now I have tried it on my own and I have learned how difficult it is, and parents are not saying 'Meet somebody and marry them,'" she said. "Arranged marriage has changed so much that it is not really arranged any more."

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