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# Eligible for marriage only if you have an elite education

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An IIT or IIM degree isn't just a ticket to professional success. It also raises your equity on the marriage market. But while graduates today are leaving campus with hefty pack packets, they claim eligible life partners are scarce. Akshay Goenka, an IIM-Bangalore student, says parents are inundated with "fair, tall and pretty" matches that hardly flatter their academic accomplishments, while Dr Manish Mattoo, MD and ISB graduate, says, "Out of 10 profiles you are sent, you will find three that have the same educational credentials as you."

For those like Dr Mattoo who want to make an educated choice, two new matchmaking services have been launched to pair people who are academically privileged. Earlier this year three IIM-Bangalore graduates set up Premium Matrimony, an elite matrimonial portal for people who have graduated from premiere educational institutions and seek equally if not more qualified partners.

People can sift through profiles of men and women who have walked the hallowed halls of India's premier schools, be it IITs, IIMs, AIIMS, NALSAR etc, free of cost until the site goes live in September. Since its beta launch in January, the site hosts 250-plus profiles, of which 82% are candidates from IITs, IIMs and NITs and 41% are women.

"Well-educated men have difficulty in searching for women with high educational background and career orientation. And women from similar backgrounds face a tougher challenge finding a groom who appreciates the fact that career is as important to them as marriage and family. Our aim is to create a platform to bring such people together," say the co-founders of Premium Matrimony who do not wish to be named.

Madhu Singh\*, a 25-year-old graduate from Vellore Institute of Technology, began looking for a match two months ago by posting her profile on two popular matrimonial sites. "But I haven't got any good response so far. People do show interest but then never get back," says Singh who is currently pursuing an M.Tech from BITS Pilani as well as working with L&T. Just a couple of days ago, she created an account on iitimshaadi.com, another portal launched in April focussing on graduates from premiere institutes.

"It's just been a few days but I am hopeful I will get some good matches," says Singh, who is looking for a partner who is from IIT or IIM as she feels educational compatibility goes a long way towards establishing a good marriage.

Ajay Gupta, who launched iitimshaadi.com in April, agrees. "A dedicated portal for graduates from top colleges and universities narrows down the search and increases the chances of finding a right match," says Gupta who branched into specialized matrimonial services after more than a decade of running a rural executive search portal.

Like Premium Matrimony, Gupta's site lists the educational institutions whose graduates are eligible to join the profile pool. Candidates have to upload documents to prove that they have passed out of these institutes. iitimshaadi.com has a total of 105 active profiles out of which 60% are male and 40% are female.

Author Rashmi Bansal who graduated from IIM Ahmedabad feels that such sites reflect the discriminatory nature of society. "It is elitist but that's the whole point. People want to be exclusive. Look at all these gated communities and exclusive clubs," says Bansal adding that filters like degree from a top school are superficial and don't matter as much as compatibility of temperament and values when it comes to searching for a life partner.

Parul Mittal, an IIT graduate who wrote about her struggle to find a husband in her book Heartbreaks and Dreams & Arranged Love, however, feels that such sites can be especially helpful for women who have studied at top-end schools.

"IIT girls are looking to marry someone with an intellect that matches theirs. They find this high intellectual capability in boys who are graduates from IITs and IIMs," she says. "However, I feel that these boys prefer a simple homemaker as life partner over an ambitious career woman as it maintains family balance," says Mittal who is married to an IITian and co-runs Rivo Kids, an online educational resource for children and parents.

Gupta agrees with her but also says that the tide is changing. "Youngsters are very clear about the kind of partners they are looking for and are giving tremendous importance to the partner's educational and professional credentials," say Premium Matrimony founders.

Ajay Gupta of iitimshaadi.com says he gets many profiles where the person claims to be from an IIT or IIM. But when asked to produce documentary proof of the same, they back out. "I have received close to 185 profiles till now and 85 of them were fake. Guys just pretend to be from IITs and think they will get away with it," says Gupta

*(Name changed on request)*