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Now dating sites for the highly educated

By M Saraswathy

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A slew of websites are catering to matchmaking needs of IITians, IIMians and others with high educational qualifications.

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Akhil Parameshwaran, a 28-year-old Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) graduate with a foreign master's degree, is not averse to his parents' suggestion that he get married to someone within the community.

But he has one condition: His life partner must have a similar educational background.

The task proved easier than pie, as a simple search on the internet helped

him locate websites that catered specifically to people like him who were looking for partners with high educational qualifications.

Parameshwaran has already received two or three proposals from IITans.

Take, for example, *Premium Matrimony*, whose three founders launched a beta version amid their batchmates from Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore.

The website, which currently has 300-plus profiles, is growing.

The founders said non-resident Indian students and professionals formed a significant part of the client base.

The founders said the aim of the portal was to offer a platform to highly educated professionals, especially girls who found it difficult to find grooms of their choice because of the popular obsession for fair, tall and pretty brides, no matter what their educational qualifications.

Same is the case with *IITIMShaadi.com*, which was launched in April 2014.

Founder Ajay Gupta says the eligibility criteria for opening an account is masters, management, engineering and law degrees.

"Individuals have to send us a scanned copy of their education certificates for final registrations to take place. Right now it is free, but we might look at a fee when we have a sufficient database," Gupta adds.

Since authenticity of information is crucial for websites looking at educational standards as their differentiator, Premium Matrimony goes in for a stringent verification process.

Premium Matrimony says it has been getting profiles of students from marquee global institutes and will soon include all top foreign universities to the regular registration process.

Websites have sprung up for dating, too.

DateIITians.com, which has now been relaunched as *COGXIO.com*, caters to students in around 1,000 top institutes across the world, including the IIMs and IITs.

Users get to choose from prospective partners in top companies.

Layak Singh, CEO and co-founder of COGXIO, says there are interactive group platforms that are unique for each institute or company; people can interact privately as well.

Based on interactions and interests over 15 preceding days, the system uses machine learning, big data and psychology techniques to recommend the top five best matches to the user.

"COGXIO allows its users to go for outing, dinner, party, event, movie, adventure or anything that makes their relation more meaningful on the website itself. So, we make them #BEINLOVE forever in real life," Singh says.

Users on these portals don't seem to be complaining.

'Being Jain', a 28-year-old Massachusetts Institute of Technology graduate who would only give his online handle, says rather than meeting prospective matches offline who might or might not be compatible, he could interact freely with girls from a similar background for a longer period before taking a leap.

"Once you are wedded to a wrong match, things cannot be reversed. We at least have the option to interact with several prospects who are well educated, before taking a final decision," he says.

That is music to the ears of these websites.

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