



PHOTO: ORCHID CHAKMA

Types of people at a holud rehearsal

IRINA JAHAN

The choreographer

This person carries the entire production on their back, and the whole weight of the performance unwittingly falls on them. Nothing starts until this person walks in. The choreographer arguably deserves to be paid, but instead, they survive purely on commitment to leadership and soaring levels of adrenaline.

The deviant

The deviant doesn't follow the steps, and they don't even know it. They follow vibes, and often these vibes put them a beat behind everyone else. Usually, that's something everyone else, apart from him, notices because they are

too immersed in the moment.

The stumbler

Most people forget the steps at some point. But this person struggles extra hard. They're always a few counts behind and constantly trying to remember what comes next. The stumbler can be heard frequently muttering apologies to those around them as they inevitably keep stepping on others like it's become part of the choreography.

The secret soloist

This one definitely does have an innate desire for the spotlight from time to time, but it's not nearly as discreet as they might think. They're convinced that they have a better grasp on the art of dancing than most, and they

always have that one song they desperately want to perform by themselves.

The food enthusiast

They never planned to dance. They're here strictly for cheerleading and snacks. To them, rehearsal is basically dinner and a show.

The professional

Nobody is entirely sure how they know the bride or groom, but someone invited them because if there's a *holud* happening in the city, their name will eventually surface. The professional will arrive with polished moves, unmatched stamina for all the Bollywood songs they will perform, and the confidence of someone who has performed at 30 weddings the past year alone.

SATIRE

Single woman starts third master's degree to avoid getting married

ZABIN TAZRIN NASHITA

It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman in possession of a Higher School Certificate must be in want of a husband.

Anikah Chowdhury, a woman who is about to attend the wedding of a younger cousin, predicts the events she expects to encounter as December rolls around. She expects this season to bring with it an inbox full of gaudy e-cards from people who finally gave up on their avoidant situationships and decided that their parents had a point about arranged marriages.

"As a 25-year-old woman with no money or prospects, my marital status is treated similarly to a matter of national crisis. This leads to an inevitable conversation that unfortunate spinsters such as us are always subject to, turning even the prospect of sneakily acquiring an extra piece of *biryani aloo* into an unappetising affair."

It starts off innocently enough with a simple question regarding your future. But one must remember that social gatherings, aside from being a wonderful way to catch up with friends and family, are a complex ritual of diplomacy that tests how well you can get away with thinly veiled condescension. So, before you start talking about your accomplishments, prepare to be inquired with the age-old question: "So, *maa*, what about marriage?"

"On one hand, you're happy that the conversation has shifted from a fatal flaw in the bride's wedding ensemble or the inadequacies of the food served during the ceremony. On the other hand, you feel tempted to make a snide remark yourself to distract everyone," says Anikah. "But of course, you have to take the high road. You've got to hope that the interrogator in question, who's probably your father's second cousin's wife's third cousin who met you once when you were five months old and is offended

that you don't recognise them, won't start bragging about how much money their son-in-law makes and instead leaves you alone."

When asked about how she has been manoeuvring such tricky situations for the past few years, Anikah shrugs and says, "I think you have to realise that it never gets easier. You'll probably receive your first marriage proposal at a random wedding when you're barely out of college, and your family will probably defend you on account of you being young. As the years pass, you're the only one who has your back, and the attacks get more aggressive. Soon, the marriage proposals go from decent prospects to men with three felonies and a recent declaration of bankruptcy, but what is a marriage without compromise?"

Anikah believes that the best way to dissuade parents who are on the hunt for a daughter-in-law is to establish that you are a person with thoughts and opinions. And what better way to display that than an education certificate?

"When I undertook my first master's degree, it was simply a way for me to delay unemployment for another year. However, after being successfully employed, I ran out of acceptable excuses for why I didn't want to get married immediately, so I decided to get a second degree. This is now my third master's degree, and if all goes well, I'll be able to create a longer delay by signing up for a PhD."



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