

Interviewee: Rajguru, Uma
Interview Date: June 8, 2011

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON
ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT

Uma Rajguru
University of Houston Oral History Project

Interviewed by: Uzma Quraishi
Date: June 8, 2011
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes
Location: Her home: Sugar Land

UQ: Oral history interview of Uma Rajguru at her house. Interview conducted by Uzma Quraishi on June 8, 2011. It's fine. So you can just begin by telling a little bit about yourself, your background and anything you want, who you are.

UR: I'm Uma Rajguru. My maiden name was Leela Gupchup born in India in Poona and then brought up in Poona and Bombay which is called as Mumbai now. I had my college education in Mumbai and then I had my Master's degree from Berkeley, California. I went back and worked at Bhabha Atomic Research Center for two and a half years, got married to Anil Rajguru and changed my name to Uma Rajguru and we were in London—Manchester for two years, went back to India, I had my oldest son, Amit. We were in Delhi for some time—for a year and then came to the United States and settled down in Houston since 1974. We had our second child, Ashish in 1974 and we have been living here since then.

UQ: Okay it sounds like you move around a lot before you finally came to Houston.

UR: A little bit, not too much.

UQ: Okay and you said that your maiden name—can you say it one more time?

UR: It is Lila Gupchup.

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UQ: So the first name was...

UR: Was Lila...

UQ: So even you changed your first name?

UR: My mother in law's first name was Lila and according to our customs we cannot have two Lila Rajguru's in the family.

UQ: I see.

UR: So since she was already there I had to change my name. So...

UQ: Interesting.

UR: So it was Uma.

UQ: So does your family from your childhood, do they still call you Lila?

UR: They still call me Lilu, Lilu is my nickname they call me by that name.

UQ: Alright so they don't call you Uma?

UR: No.

UQ: Okay interesting. So you remained in Houston since then and your husband, his occupation was?

UR: He is a chemical engineer and he has been working with a Fluor Engineering company since '74.

UQ: Oh he's still with the same company?

UR: He changed for two years in between. He went to ABB Lummis which is ABB now and he went back to Fluor and he is still there, he's still working.

UQ: Okay. So you've been in the U.S. for many, many years now. If you had to describe yourself for the census for demographic purposes what labels would you use to describe yourself?

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UR: Can you repeat that question?

UQ: Yeah if you had to make, if you had to assign labels for yourself what names would you use I am a ... an American or...

UR: I have accepted American citizenship. It took me a long time to accept American citizenship. Everybody else was American. My husband had his citizenship in around 1980 or '82 something like that. I didn't change it. My son was born, my older son was born Indian but when he was 18 he changed to American citizenship. My younger son was born here so he was born American citizen but since the law started changing and we were not sure whether you will get social security or not or different things, what will the situation, I accepted American citizenship after 2000.

UQ: So very, very recently.

UR: Very recently, yes.

UQ: So would you describe yourself as an Indian-American or...?

UR: At heart I'm still Indian but I do mix with American people and we have accepted a lot of their customs so that we are not completely disassociated from American culture.

UQ: What makes someone Indian? You said at heart you are Indian. What makes you Indian?

UR: The thoughts. We have an Indian committee center. We participate in that greatly. We perform the plays. We celebrate our religious function. So we follow everything. At the same time we also celebrate Christmas. Because children are brought up here, they like it and the grandchildren love it.

UQ: Okay. Why did you decide to come to Houston? You had many cities to choose from?

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UR: My husband got a job here.

UQ: So he applied in other cities first? First he applied for jobs and then...

UR: He applied for... no he had green card and he landed in New York. He went to Chicago. Actually in New York he had three or four interviews and he got almost all the jobs they offered, all the companies offered him jobs. So his first thinking was that he will have a job in New York. Then he had lost his luggage. So he didn't have anything. His sister was already staying at Chicago so he went to her place. When he went to her place he had another chance for interview for Fluor Engineering company and his boss, that time I think Mr. Hancock (or I forgot his name). He interviewed him on the airport and he offered him job immediately. So he didn't know anybody in Houston. He had two uncles in New York so he was in kind of two minds which one to accept. But because of the way they are in New York it gets extremely cold and he asked somebody some friends how the way that it is in Houston and they said it is tropical weather, very hot. There are cockroaches, there are mosquitoes, you name it whatever you have in Bombay you have it here. So he said, "Say no more I'll accept that job." So we came to Houston and I joined him later.

UQ: So he came in what year?

UR: He came in 1974, April and I joined him in June.

UQ: Oh I see, so soon after that.

UR: Yes.

UQ: And during that time April, May you were in New York?

UR: No. I was in India with my mother.

UQ: Okay so you came straight to...

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UR: Straight to Houston.

UQ: Do you think that together you would have considered a job in another southern city, say Mississippi, a city there?

UR: There was no need to. He got the job so he accepted it.

UQ: Did he have any idea of what Houston would be like as far as accepting foreigners?

UR: No probably not, no.

UQ: No?

UR: We liked the city and since we are here.

UQ: Did you know anything about Houston before you came here?

UR: No I didn't.

UQ: Nothing at all?

UR: No.

UQ: What was your image of what it would be like?

UR: I had been I was in the United States in '63 to '65 doing my Master's degree in California and Houston was just like another big city, developing city so I had some idea about it and I had read about it but I had not seen it before.

UQ: So you didn't have the picture of cowboys and horses and all this as Texas?

UR: No, no. I had read about it. I had read some stories about it.

UQ: Okay.

UR: And I had seen some cowboy pictures at the movies in India so that's about it.

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UQ: Alright. Where did you first live when you first arrived in Houston? Where was your first home?

UR: We lived in apartment. It was Fondren and Bellaire... Braeswood.

UQ: Okay. And what was that area like back then?

UR: It was pretty good at that time. We had a three bedroom apartment when we started and we lived there comfortably for about 8 months and then we moved into the house. It was in Quail Valley West and we had three bedroom house.

UQ: Were the areas similar? Where your apartment was located and where you house was?

UR: Yes pretty similar.

UQ: How has it changed, those areas?

UR: It was just the same...

UQ: No I mean from then until now. Are you still familiar?

UR: We changed that house to Glenshire East in 1980 and that was a bigger house, much bigger and we lived there comfortably until 2009, almost 30 years, 29 years. We had a lot of friends there a lot of Maharashtrians as well as a lot of Indians and our neighbors were our good friends, not necessarily Indians. Some Koreans, some Americans and we lived there very happily, children went to school, they graduated when we were in that house. Then recently my son moved into a house in Telfair and we wanted to be closer to him that's why we moved to Greatwood.

UQ: Okay so how did you choose the area for your first apartment? Did your husband already choose that before you came?

UR: My husband had already chosen.

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UQ: How did you choose your first home, the smaller home that you said? How did you choose that neighborhood versus all the other neighborhoods in Houston?

UR: We like southwest area.

UQ: Why?

UR: We didn't want to stay close to downtown. We didn't want to be very close into the very congested area and this was a new developing area that's why we decided to stay in Braeburn Valley. And it was a new house. We got it built according to what the baby wanted.

UQ: I see it's custom. So the downtown area, what was that like back then? Why would you avoid the downtown area?

UR: Downtown we could not have had a house probably. They were probably too expensive. And my husband worked at Fluor so this place was convenient for us to live.

UQ: Did you look at other neighborhoods as well when you first began your house search?

UR: Around Hillcroft area.

UQ: Okay.

UR: And this was new developing area that's why we liked it.

UQ: Fondren and Hillcroft were all sort of new at that time?

UR: Braeburn Valley, this was new houses were coming up and this was at West Belford and 59.

UQ: What would you say attracted you aside from the convenience factor? Were there other things about that neighborhood...?

UR: Nothing really.

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UQ: The people?

UR: We just liked the plan of the house. We didn't even know anybody there at that time. Once we went there we decided to make the friendships with others. The school district, schools were good.

UQ: How did you know about the school district?

UR: We enquired about it.

UQ: Okay and did the realtor inform you or?

UR: The realtor informed us yes.

UQ: But you didn't have friend already in the area who could tell you?

UR: One or two Indian friends were there already.

UQ: When you say the school district was a good school district what makes you say that it's good, what makes a district good? How do you define good?

UR: This is what the realtor told us and we accepted that.

UQ: Who were your earliest closest friends in Houston at that time? Do you remember some of your closest friends?

UR: Oh some Indian families. I heard of a friend who I knew from India. Her name is Shobha. Maiden name is Shobha Gokhale, now she is Shobha Kulkarni. She lived in Braeburn Valley, that area.

UQ: Was she also from Maharashtra or no?

UR: She is Maharashtrian, yes.

UQ: So she lived in that neighborhood. That's nice to have someone close by from your home state. The other residents of your neighborhood and even the other

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neighborhood that you moved to the second one were they mostly professionals? How would you describe the people?

UR: Mostly professionals.

UQ: And age wise...?

UR: Even in Braeburn Valley, mostly they were all professionals and in the Glen Shire, most of them were professionals.

UQ: Families?

UR: Family oriented with young kids probably similar to my children's age.

UQ: Okay so this was not young single type?

UR: No.

UQ: The different groups, is it mostly whites in the neighborhood were there a lot of Asians, a lot of Indians?

UR: A lot of Indians but we did mix with the other people also.

UQ: Were there Hispanics in the neighborhood also?

UR: Not too many. At that time we did not know that many Hispanic people.

UQ: Chinese?

UR: There were Chinese, there were Americans.

UQ: By Americans do you mean white Americans?

UR: Americans, white Americans and as well as black. We did have some good friends, white as well as black. We were quite happy.

UQ: Very family-oriented type upbringing for your kids?

UR: Yes.

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UQ: So your earliest friend you said you mentioned Shobha and some of the neighbors; has this changed until now? The kinds of friends you interact with?

UR: She is still a good friend but we have some other, very close friends now.

UQ: Are they mostly Indian?

UR: Mostly Indians, some Americans... also good friends.

UQ: Now that the kids are grown and they all have their own homes how is interaction with the neighbors since you don't have the small kids to play with each other, is it the same as it used to be before or would you say that it's changed?

UR: No, we don't have to be with the children anymore; though we still visit our grandchildren almost every day. They don't live too far. But we have other friends who are nearby in this area and we visit them almost every weekend is busy with some activity or get-together.

UQ: And the people on your street are you close friends?

UR: No not necessarily but we have some good families, Indian families. We go to them. We know an American family in this neighborhood so we go out and eat with them. Then mostly weekends we spend with the grandchildren which is in Telfair and otherwise... either we invite somebody or somebody else is inviting us.

UQ: You are still very active socially?

UR: And we are still very active socially. We do participate in our community programs. We like to act in the plays which we have been doing. My husband is still acting in the plays.

UQ: Wow.

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UR: I do help them back stage and all of that and I also was acting until almost last year.

UQ: It seemed like when you described the neighborhoods you lived in when you first came to Houston that in those neighborhoods there a sense of community where kids played together and you guys had good friends in the neighborhood but now it seems like maybe not so much a sense of community, people are more, are they more isolated in their homes do you feel?

UR: Even they are isolated, they live in the same area like Sugarland or Quail Valley, even in Katy and we do go and visit them. We are not isolated from anybody.

UQ: I see.

UR: Our circle has grown a lot. So that's why I'm saying almost every weekend either somebody is coming here or we are going to somebody.

UQ: So I guess in a way the neighborhood now means something much bigger than what it used to right?

UR: It's much bigger. Because when we are acting in the plays, most of the people who are from the Katy area and we did not mind going there or they came here and we had the practices together.

UQ: What struggles do you remember facing when you first came to the United States?

UR: What?

UQ: What were the hardest things about moving here?

UR: It's just I miss my family but apart from that we settled down quickly.

UQ: Did you feel like Houstonians were welcoming?

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UR: I had no problem. My husband did not have any problem, no.

UQ: Okay. Were there some ways that being an immigrant affected your life here in Houston?

UR: Not really, not really.

UQ: So you sort of feel like even if you had been born and raised here your experience would have been similar in terms of how people responded to you.

UR: Probably. Because my children also did not have any problem as I could mention it you know.

UQ: Okay. Do your children feel, you said that you feel Indian at heart; do they feel Indian at heart?

UR: They do. Most of their... even though their activities are more Americanized, yes they do celebrate religious functions with us and they do attend some of the activities which we do for our Indian community. Even though I don't have an Indian daughter-in-law she is very much like all my friends and she mixes with everybody. So we are really glad to have her. She is Mexican or Hispanic you can say.

UQ: Okay, she was raised here?

UR: She was raised in Mexico City but she has been in this country for a long time.

UQ: So that is why she is fluent in Spanish because she actually spent many years there.

UR: Yes.

UQ: Okay. You first started working in which year?

UR: I started working in 1976.

UQ: Okay that was after you had your... you already had your first son.

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UR: My first son was born in India.

UQ: The second one...

UR: The second one was born here in 1974. When he was about 18 months old I started working.

UQ: Okay. What were your co-workers like in your first job?

UR: Very friendly. Very nice. There was one girl from Pakistan, Alia Kazi, my best friend and we were very, very close friends and we still are. Even others, I had two black girls as my friends, Christine Chevis and Melva Seals. They were very good friends and then I became friendly with almost everybody.

UQ: Did you have much opportunity to interact with your coworkers outside of work?

UR: Yes I did. I used to meet Alia quite often, go to her place. I never thought she has a different religion because I was so friendly with her mother-in-law, her sister-in-law and even her husband. They used to come to our place to eat. We went to their place to eat so religion didn't make any difference. Then another black girl, Christine Chevis, we went out to eat together many times.

UQ: Was she married, did she have kids?

UR: She had kids.

UQ: So did you meet as a family like family with family?

UR: Yes sometimes she brought her kids to my place. Then there was an American girl, Fran Schaefer. She used to bring her kid to my place and they played together. There was another American girl, Kim Anty, the families we went out to eat together. Her children and my children were of the same age so they played together. And I guess many more.

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UQ: Okay so these names you mentioned were all people who were with you at work?

UR: They worked with me in microbiology lab yes.

UQ: And how many years did you work?

UR: I worked at Ben Taub for twenty years. Then I had some other Indian friends also later on who joined much later, maybe after five years or so. There was Kumud Pulijar she is from South India. She is from Andhra, a good friend of mine and we still are good friends and we still meet. There is another girl with Muslim religion, Zulekha Raheem still good friend with me and we do meet even though I left Ben Taub and there were some Gujarati girls, Mamta Shah, Hema Patel, we still meet. So we have kept the relations.

UQ: Did you find toward the end of your twenty years at Ben Taub that you socialized more with other Indian coworkers or that you were still socializing with the many groups you used to.

UR: I was socializing with almost everybody right from the beginning.

UQ: And it stayed that way until the time you left?

UR: It stayed that way yes.

UQ: Are you in touch with the two early people you had mentioned, Melva and Christine?

UR: Christine passed away and when she was sick I went to see her quite often. Melva, I do meet her sometime but not that often. Actually Melva also lived in the same neighborhood that I, as I used to.

UQ: I see.

UR: So I used to see her sometime.

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UQ: In my other interviews people have mentioned that in the '60s, especially in the '60s and the '70s because so many men were coming from India and Pakistan as students they married non-Indians and non-Pakistanis. Did you see that around you? Did you see that happening?

UR: Oh probably but some of the Indians students who are coming from India now, they are already engaged or married so I would say 70 percent are already married to Indian or engaged to Indian girls and maybe 30 percent are married in different community. It could be American it could be Mexican it could be anybody else.

UQ: So have you attended some of these weddings recently, the mixed marriages?

UR: Yes I did, yes.

UQ: And they have been American, they've been Mexican, you know that in your family...

UR: Even Korean or Chinese, yes.

UQ: What about... whose left? Black?

UR: Just a few of them.

UQ: Not too many?

UR: Not too many.

UQ: Why do you think that's less?

UR: Should be okay as long as the husband and wife they are together and they like each other. It should be alright.

UQ: But if people are doing it less then maybe some people don't think it is as acceptable? Do people talk about that?

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UR: Whether it is acceptable or not I guess the parents are happy if the children are happy. We have some good friends that are married with, the girls married a black person and he has been accepted very well in the family.

UQ: When the community first... is he Maharashtrian not he, they, is this family Maharashtrian?

UR: Family is Maharashtrian, yes.

UQ: So when the Maharashtrian community first found out about this girl being interested you know in him, the two of them together what was the general, sort of talk, you know how anuties talk, what was their reaction?

UR: I did not participate that much in the gossip so I really wouldn't be able to say much about it.

UQ: Okay. So do you remember back from then, were there the same kind of mixed marriages or it doesn't...?

UR: Just a few. Especially black just a few, but quite a few married American girls or even oriental girls. My own son married a Hispanic girl.

UQ: Is that less?

UR: My other son is engaged to an American girl.

UQ: Is the marriage to Hispanic girls is that less than to white?

UR: Probably.

UQ: Why do you think that is?

UR: Depends on whom they meet I guess.

UQ: Okay. How do you think your parents would have felt if when you came here to study at Berkeley you decided to marry a non Indian?

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UR: My parents were very, very open and anybody whom I liked they would have gone along with that.

UQ: Your marriage to your husband, was that semi-arranged?

UR: It was arranged marriage. My husband's mother and my mother were schoolmates. They met after a long time and my mother in law said that my son is coming from Europe and since I had studied here my mother always wanted that I should marry somebody who has lived or studied in a foreign country. It just worked out I guess.

UQ: Why did she think that would make a difference, the overseas studying?

UR: Not necessarily, that was just her wish. I don't know why. Because I studied abroad maybe she wanted somebody who had studied abroad and had similar ideas as I had probably.

UQ: Okay, were these outside degrees were they held in higher regard than degrees from Indian universities at that time?

UR: Not necessarily. But children with good education, good... what shall I say?

UQ: Family background?

UR: What shall I say? [Thinking]

UQ: [In Hindi] You can say it in Hindi.

UR: First class, distinction, the cleaver...

UQ: The honors?

UR: Children with the education with honors degree usually were sent abroad by the parents so naturally she thought that somebody who has studied abroad, the parents probably have the same financial background or the son is probably with better education

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on that and clever, intelligent. So maybe that's why she might have thought about it.

UQ: Okay.

UR: At least in those days not everybody got chance to go abroad maybe that's why.

UQ: Did you know your husband before?

UR: No, I didn't.

UQ: Okay. When I say the words, actually I'm going to show you... no, we'll come back to that. When I say the words, "American South, the South or southern culture" what comes to your mind?

UR: Southern culture?

UQ: Yes... nothing? When I say American South, nothing? That's fine.

UR: Why does that...?

UQ: Because Houston sometimes people...

UR: More conservatives. Southern people are probably more conservative.

UQ: Sure.

UR: Than North, people in the North. But it didn't make that much difference to us because like accepting somebody from other countries, some Indians did have problem with that; that they were not accepted or people were not friendly to them, the Americans. But actually Americans, all of them... they are also from somewhere else also. Some Germans, Australians and all that... the friends which, the American friends whom we met, they were very open minded and those with whom we are friends with, they have been really good friends to us all along, so I didn't have any problem with that.

UQ: Do you think that living in Houston which, as you said before, is a big city helps as compared to if you lived in a small town in Texas?

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UR: I don't have any experience with that.

UQ: You're right you don't have any experience just...

UR: Probably the small town people are more friendly I'm not sure.

UQ: Alright.

UR: I'm not sure like anywhere you go probably people are more friendly... more interactive when you live in a small town.

UQ: Alright and the friends who you had said who had some, maybe some problems with the way people responded to them...

UR: I said they may have.

UQ: So amongst your friends this never came up?

UR: Nobody.

UQ: They never talked about any issues at all?

UR: No.

UQ: Okay what about at work, were there any issues in terms of getting promotions or maybe use your accent as an issue?

UR: I didn't have any problems. My husband didn't have any it either.

UQ: No? So also the accent they didn't...?

UR: Accent... people didn't have that much problem understanding me. When I had come here for my studies, yes I had a little problem how to pronounce anything which has "I" in between like "anti" I used to say "antee" and I used to say "pip-ed" but they used to say "piped" but people were very open and they would ask me to spell it out and when I spelled it out it was okay and I also wanted to change the way my American

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accent is. So I tried to change, not that much but now people don't have any problem understanding me.

UQ: Your accent is very clear. I guess what I'm wondering is if it prevented you from receiving promotions or raises at work at all?

UR: No I didn't. In fact, after ten years of medical technologist I became supervisor at Ben Taub so that I could talk to so many other agents and representatives and different doctors, I did not have any problem.

UQ: Okay, you had mentioned earlier or you've said a couple of times "American" and by that you mean white Americans. I guess I'll ask you a direct question, when you say that how come you don't think of blacks as American or Mexicans as American. Why does American mean white?

UR: No, I didn't say that. Black people are also Americans, Hispanics, even I'm American.

UQ: Right. Yeah. So I'm wondering when you say American you are just referring to... is it just a convenient way of just saying that.

UR: Probably.

UQ: Alright.

UR: I didn't mean that.

UQ: No I know you didn't. I'm just trying...

UR: I did mention that I did have some black Americans as good friends of mine.

UQ: Of course.

UR: Christine Chavez and Melva Seals.

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UQ: Okay I want to talk a little bit about marriage in India and kind of practice, customs over there. What do you think are the main criteria in India that parents look for in their future son or daughter in law, you know in an arranged marriage. I know that not everybody does arranged marriage now there's kind of semi arranged or even non but...

UR: Basically the education of the boy, the family, if they have the same status as you have so that there should not be any problem later on and they do ask other families whom they know how the boys, how the behavior and everything.

UQ: Okay. So education, family, kind of the behavior, those are important markers. Are those things your parents also look for, for you and do you have brothers and sisters as well?

UR: I have brother.

UQ: One brother that's it?

UR: One brother yes.

UQ: So for him when they were trying to find someone they also look for the same thing?

UR: Same thing yes.

UQ: Okay they want an educated girl.

UR: Educated girl from a good family and with the same status not too rich and not too... you know...

UQ: Middle class.

UR: Same status.

UQ: Okay, when you were growing up can you recall people commenting, you know when people talk, aunties talk especially, can you recall them commenting when they are

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trying to do these match making (I know that I hear it a lot when you are around certain people who like to do the match making and they will say, “Oh this person should be with that person.” “Oh no, [in Hindi] she’s very pretty but, he’s not so handsome so they shouldn’t be together.” Did you hear some of that kind of talk about these ideas of who is pretty and who is handsome? Who belongs together?

UR: Is it now?

UQ: No when you were a child listening...

UR: No, not really. I was introduced to two or three other boys but probably it was not meant to be. This was one meant to be but all of them were arranged marriages so all of them kind of arranged things. So it didn’t matter.

UQ: Okay. Before you ever met your spouse, you’ve talked about what the parents looked for... for their future daughter- or son-in-law. What about you, did you have some kind of things in mind about what you expected?

UR: That time I didn’t want to marry a doctor because my uncle was a doctor and I knew how busy he used to be. Now I think the trend had changed. People just work probably their working hours and that’s about it. But my uncle used to get calls anytime day and night and he had to go. So I just thought that I didn’t want a doctor. But in general in those days besides doctor I think engineers were the most in demand. So I wanted an engineer, that’s for sure; and preferably with the foreign education or at least working in a foreign country. My husband was working in Europe and when we got married he had a job with Bechtel.

UQ: So you wanted an engineer because they could have...

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UR: My father was engineer, my brother was engineer, my other uncle was engineer so probably that's what influenced me.

UQ: Seemed familiar to you. Did you also think about maybe how the person should look, was that...?

UR: Not really no.

UQ: Now when we see that this is something that girls do think about now. But I know that my mother has said, [in Hindi] "In those days, we never thought about such things," and would you say that's pretty much true with your friends also that they didn't really think about appearance as much?

UR: As long as person is not is that the word repelling?

UQ: Sure, like repulsive.

UR: Yeah repulsive, with a pleasant personality that's all I would say.

UQ: Okay.

UR: My husband had a pleasant personality.

UQ: I've met him he does have a pleasant personality. So did you help...

UR: Not necessarily good looking or anything but just pleasant, that's all.

UQ: So not necessarily good looking just the more important thing is personality.

UR: Pleasant, I mean about the nature, you don't know before, you just...

UQ: You come to find out later.

UR: You have to work with it.

UQ: Yeah. Did you ask about him from maybe his cousins or something? Did you know anything about him before?

UR: No not really, no.

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UQ: Did you have an opportunity to talk to him?

UR: We got married within 15 days.

UQ: Quick.

UR: But we did have time to meet each other and talk about our future and all of that.

He seemed quite okay.

UQ: He seemed like a nice guy?

UR: Yeah.

UQ: I guess, I'm guessing you didn't help choose your children's spouses. It seems like they found their own partners.

UR: They found their own, yes.

UQ: Okay did you want to help them choose? Did you suggest people?

UR: We did, we suggested. Probably didn't work out.

UQ: Okay and were they open to your suggestions?

UR: They were open, yes.

UQ: Or did they just say, "No I'll do it myself."

UR: No they were very, very open. And they did see some Indian girls because basically our first reaction was to have Indian daughter-in-laws and we did introduce them to Indian girls. But it didn't work out. Whatever reason, probably it was not meant to be. My older son married a Mexican Hispanic girl and when he brought her first to our place, we really liked her. Very, very nice. Very open and very friendly. And as we got to know her more and more we really liked her more and more. I mean it could have been any other Indian girl or her it doesn't make any difference. Her family also is very friendly and we are, all of us are very close to each other.

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UQ: Okay. When the Indian girls that you had introduced your son to before, were they from Houston?

UR: They were from Houston.

UQ: All of them. How did you... like what qualities were you looking for?

UR: Good education, good family. Somebody suggested so that's about it.

UQ: There was some kind of family connection or somebody referred them?

UR: Yes.

UQ: Did your children, did your sons have the same expectations, good education, good family?

UR: Yes they did.

UQ: They looked for the same things?

UR: Yes.

UQ: I know that with the Pakistani community there are certain Pakistani women, in particular who like to do the match making. Is it similar with the Maharashtrian community here? There are some people who just like to do it and they keep a list or pictures like that?

UR: Somebody suggest if they know that girl is marriage age so they will suggest.

UQ: Then what happens after they suggest?

UR: The boy and the girl they meet if they... if it doesn't click that's it.

UQ: So that's the first step; after the suggestion you just meet? So they are not exchanging photographs first or exchanging bios?

UR: Probably they do. I don't know. It didn't happen with my children.

UQ: Okay.

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UR: Probably they do it like emails, send or exchange photographs before they meet.

UQ: So it's kind of like, it's not fully arranged because they two do meet immediately and so would you say that the choice lies mostly or entirely with the young people?

UR: Probably now, yes.

UQ: Mostly or entirely?

UR: Well I see some of my friends they have arranged marriages. But most of them have chosen their own.

UQ: Some of them still agree?

UR: Some of them do.

UQ: Trust their parents to make the choice for them?

UR: Yes. My children have told me that if you find somebody else, somebody, just let us know, introduce us to them and if it works out fine and if it doesn't work out that's fine too. They were open.

UQ: Okay. Did you ever disagree like where you thought that she is a really good girl you should give her another chance and your son said...?

UR: No I did not interfere with my kids ideas no.

UQ: Got it okay.

UR: If they said, "No it didn't work out." I accepted that. I never asked them any questions.

UQ: Of the Maharashtrian community do feel like or do you see that most of the young people are getting married or do some of them stay single? How is it? By the time they are like 30.

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UR: Some are single and I do not know why. Nothing wrong with them it's probably just meant to be like that.

UQ: Mostly boys or girls who stay single?

UR: Both.

UQ: Both okay. Do you find that there are disadvantages to letting the kids decide for themselves completely? Could there be disadvantages to that? I'm going to ask the same questions about the arranged marriages as well.

UR: I can't say that. I don't have answer; because you cannot force anybody to marry somebody. I'm sure they must have tried. But if it didn't work out probably they didn't. I mean the girl or the boy, they have to like the partner before they get married. You can't just say, "so and so is a nice girl so just marry her." So...

UQ: And in the arranged marriage system, have you ever heard that anyone has forced?

UR: No I don't think so.

UQ: So do you think in your opinion there is always some choice?

UR: Yes. It just works out.

UQ: There is some choice for the young people always?

UR: Yes.

UQ: For (again this is from my own experience) I find that sometimes the girls if they are overqualified (like too much education) then they have a hard time finding somebody in the arranged marriage system where there is a matchmaker because the sometimes outdistance the guys, like if she's a doctor then the guy says... similarly if somebody, what are the other factors?

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UR: Making more money.

UQ: Sure, money can be a disadvantage. Is it the same thing in the Maharashtrian?

UR: Probably it's true or it may not be true. Again it entirely depends on husband and wife what they can accept. Sometimes it works out fine without any problem.

UQ: Do you think that there are some people who are more at risk for not getting married like some...?

UR: Probably they do want to get married but they don't find a right person, probably whatever they think right. They probably decide to just stay by themselves. As you grow older it's difficult to get adjusted to somebody. So they prefer to stay by themselves.

UQ: Alright we are going to go to another section where we are putting the marriage questions aside for now. Are there groups here in the U.S. who you have seen are discriminated against?

UR: Which groups?

UQ: Any at all any kind.

UR: I mean are you talking about Indians groups?

UQ: Any groups and just in your experience and what you read, what you know, what you hear about? It could be gays, it could be anyone but are there groups that you think are discriminated against?

UR: Probably there are. We have not discriminated anybody but probably there are. That's what we read or see on the TV.

UQ: What groups do you hear about or do you see on the TV?

UR: Oh, probably gays or maybe people with less education, I'm not sure.

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UQ: Okay. How do you think that kind of discrimination is best addressed? What do you think could be done to lessen discrimination against the groups you mentioned? Can it be changed?

UR: It can be changed if everybody changed. That probably is difficult. There always could be somebody who will be discriminating somebody. Most people are getting more and more open and accepting.

UQ: Did you hear of this kind of discrimination when you first came to Houston? Was it different then? You didn't hear as much about anti-gay discrimination?

UR: Now, yes.

UQ: But back then were there other groups?

UR: Back then we didn't hear that much about these people. Now it is coming more and more open.

UQ: Were there different groups discriminated against at that time, maybe in the newspaper that you read about?

UR: Probably we didn't notice at that time because we were so busy among ourselves probably we didn't notice that. But now we see more and more about it on the television, media.

UQ: Okay. I already asked you, you said there is no occasion where you felt that you were treated unfairly because of your Indian origins right?

UR: Right.

UQ: What about within the Indian community, are any groups within the Indian community, Maharashtrian community who are discriminated against or even just treated unfairly or differently?

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UR: I have not noticed it among Maharashtrian family.

UQ: What about people from between different parts of India. So for example, Punjabi versus Hyderabadi versus Keralites, is there any kind of that you have witnessed or heard about.

UR: I have not witnessed anything.

UQ: Any kind of ...?

UR: Because I have Keralites friends, I have Pakistani friends, I have Bengali friends I have Orissa friends, South Indian friends so no I haven't...

UQ: So in your...

UR: Very good relations so...

UQ: With all of them? And have you heard about any of the groups having tension between any of them?

UR: No I haven't heard about it no.

UQ: I'm going to ask you a little more about your childhood.

UR: Okay.

UQ: In India how often when you were very young did you have conversations with... well no let me back up. So I know that you grew up in Pune you said.

UR: And Mumbai.

UQ: How old were you when you made that shift?

UR: I was about 13 years old when I went to Bombay.

UQ: Oh, so you have very vivid memories of Pune as well.

UR: And we still have house in Pune and my relatives so we do go often to Pune.

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UQ: Okay so help me to understand where you fit in, in all the many groups that any society has. All societies are broken down into groups. In America we have Indians, within Indians we have Maharashtrians so in Maharashtra also, there are groups. Can you explain to me kind of where you fit in with that? Is there some kind of a sub group within Maharashtra state that your family identifies with or your extended family is a part of? Is that a hard question?

UR: Yeah it's a hard question.

UQ: Okay so let me see. For example in the Middle East, in Saudi Arabia each family can identify the larger tribe that their ancestry is from. They can say they are from the tribe of Bani Hashim or Quraish or like this. So sometimes we see in Pakistan that people identify with a particular part of, you know, of Panjab, northern Pakistan or with us, my family migrated to Karachi so they don't have a link to the land in Pakistan, you know, but in India, you know, everybody has some kind of like to some place. What...

UR: We belong to Pune

UQ: Okay and your ancestors also lived there?

UR: I guess.

UQ: You think so. It's hard to know.

UR: Yeah, I don't know much.

UQ: So you met your grandparents?

UR: No I have not seen my grandparents.

UQ: No, okay.

UR: They were deceased before I was born.

UQ: Were great-grandparents?

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UR: No, no no...I didn't even see my grandparents.

UQ: Sometimes people out live others you never know. So are there stories about ancestors?

UR: I don't know much about great grandparents.

UQ: No?

UR: A few stories about grandparents but not that many.

UQ: Okay and sometimes families...

UR: My mother's mother was living when I was born so she is the only one I'd seen.

UQ: But when you were born you don't remember her right?

UR: No I do remember her, yes. She died when I was 13, 14... so I do remember her yes.

UQ: Some families have sort of like family myths that they hand down about their family roots. Is there anything like that in your family?

UR: No apart from that just one thing that in Pune there's a temple named after our last name it's Ganesha Temple, it says Gupchup's Ganpati and it was built by my father's uncle and even though the priest is staying there and performing the prayers and all that, the name is still there and my brother is one of the trustees now, so was my father. But later on we don't know what's going to happen because his son lives here. So we will see what happens later on but just trustees.

UQ: Why does the temple have your family name?

UR: It was built by him.

UQ: Oh okay.

UR: My father's uncle.

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UQ: I see, I see...

UR: He had a big property over there. So it was just named. It's very famous as Gupchup's Ganpati. There are several temples just like you have several mosques, seven temples of Ganesha so this is one of them.

UQ: Okay so your family owned land in Pune?

UR: Yes it used to be there. Now it's given somebody else.

UQ: So now much less than.

UR: Yes we have a house in Poona.

UQ: Right but the farm land is gone. Do you know how long your family has had land in the past?

UR: I don't know.

UQ: But your grandparents had land obviously.

UR: Yes.

UQ: So in Pune, you interacted in your childhood before you were 13, you interacted with... who did you interact with did you live in the city?

UR: Yes, we lived in the city.

UQ: And is it a very big bustling city or how would you describe it?

UR: It was a developing city. Poona has kind of a very good university. It also used to be capital of Maratha king, Shivaji. So it has a historical importance also.

UQ: Sure.

UR: It's not flat, it has hills and there are forts on the hills and it is a very pretty city, the river flows through that.

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UR: Really?

UQ: You lived... I'm imagining the hills are off to one side or they are surrounding?

UR: They surround actually.

UQ: Oh really so is the city itself hilly?

UR: It's at elevation a little bit. Those mountains it's the Sahyadri Mountains [Western Ghats] and there's lots of forts around it and the mountains and a lot of hills also in the heart of the city and there is a fort, it's right in the heart of the city.

UQ: And the farm land?

UR: Where the *Peshwas*—the prime ministers—and the king, they live there. It's called Shaniwar Wada and it's right in the heart of the city, not too far from our house.

UQ: Very old building?

UR: Yeah that's very old. I think from 1600 or something or 1700.

UQ: Yeah quite old, okay.

UR: And temples on the hills which the king used to visit and the Peshwas used to visit and the place where we live it's likely outside and we have a bungalow and we still have it and we do visit that part.

UQ: So the farm land is outside of the city or within?

UR: It was not farm land. It had a big *haveli* [mansion]-like thing that we maybe had three but it's not *haveli* as such. It's called *ravda* in Poona; in Marathi it's called *ravda*. There are residential areas on four sides with the courtyard in the middle.

UQ: I see. V-A-D-A in English?

UR: "Rwada" I'm not sure.

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UQ: So every city has to have some kind, usually it has some kind of agricultural area to support to feed the people of the city and that you say is in the surrounding areas?

UR: Yes probably.

UQ: So you didn't go out there too much?

UR: No.

UQ: So your interactions were all in the city itself?

UR: In the city yes.

UQ: And you got your... where did your family get their produce from, their groceries?

UR: The grocery shop.

UQ: They didn't have like a [in Hindi] "a peddler come by."

UR: Yeah, the "bhaji wala" [vegetable vendor] used to come or you can go to the shop and buy groceries or vegetables. There were shops there.

UQ: Okay.

UR: And you go to the big bazaar like "Mandi," what do they call it?

UQ: "Sabzi Mandi." Alright. So did you have, in Poona did you have opportunity to interact with people of different religions like Sikhs and Jains?

UR: No not that many. In Poona, it's mostly Maharashtrians. My school has mostly Maharashtrians.

UQ: Okay.

UR: It was a girls' high school.

UQ: Girls size?

UR: Girls' high school.

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UQ: Okay. And it was only the high school, the upper grades not the lower grades.

UR: No it was, there was a primary school and then the girls' high school and on the other side there was a boys' school. But the boys and girls were separated.

UQ: Did you know most of the people in the neighborhood?

UR: In the neighborhood, yes?

UQ: Your family also must have had old connections.

UR: Yes.

UQ: Okay now what about, now I have not asked this question before so I don't even know how to ask it so tell me if I'm asking it wrong. But did you interact with people on lower caste like the untouchables?

UR: Lower caste? Like we had the servants, is that what you are talking about?

UQ: Sure.

UR: Yes. I had a nanny. She lived with us, well, I was a year old and she lived with us and she died after my son was born, my oldest son was born. She became a part of the family. She always stayed with us. Her family used to come and visit us. We never minded anything. So my mother was very good with the servants which used to come and work at our house. And probably the same thing I got from her. I mean she didn't have to teach me anything but how to react with other people.

UQ: You learned by example.

UR: Yeah very friendly yes.

UQ: Okay.

UR: She would never treat a servant as such that's what I'm saying.

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UQ: I'm trying to imagine what your life was like when you were young and looking through your eyes can you tell... did the servants dress different, did they look different? How did you know?

UR: Of course they did dress different in a sense, simple saris. We had a cook. He also stayed with us. Then we had another person who used to come and sweep and all of that and we had a driver and...

UQ: Were they very old?

UR: No they were not very old.

UQ: Did they have families?

UR: They had their own families.

UQ: And the families, did they live on your property or somewhere else?

UR: No somewhere else.

UQ: So these employees they came and they did their work and they left?

UR: Right and only the cook and this lady [the nanny] stayed with us.

UQ: Do you remember their names?

UR: Yes. The nanny was with us her name was Anusia and the cook his name was Kulkarni, his last name, we used to call him Kulkarni. Driver was Pandoo and the person who used to come and sweep his name was Vithu and the ladies who used to come and wash the dishes, one was called Bhagu and the other was Seru.

UQ: Okay so all of these were kind of lower caste?

UR: They were lower caste.

UQ: How do you know? How does somebody know, by their profession?

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UR: By the profession or the cook was actually Brahmin so I wouldn't call him as a lower caste but probably he was cook so he stayed with us. The lady, my nanny was Sona, which was goldsmith and we never treated her as a lower cast person. She lived with us. She did everything. After the cook left she used to cook for us also. I mean after I grew up she started cooking and she lived with us until I said until Amit was one. She took care of him for me.

UQ: I see.

UR: And the driver was probably Maratha. Maratha means warrior and so was the sweeper. There were just poor probably. That's why they were doing these jobs.

UQ: Did you hear about people who mistreated their staff?

UR: Their servants? No not in those days, probably before but no.

UQ: Okay and they were paid?

UR: They were paid, they were paid and they were really faithful and very nice.

UQ: It seems like they stayed with you a long time.

UR: Yeah we had them for a long time.

UQ: Can you remember the existence of people of other ancestries. Like I've read that there have been Jews who live especially in Mumbai, there's a community of Jews, community of African...like Siddhis. Did you remember this from your childhood? Do you recall?

UR: There were Iranis, a lot of Iranis were there in Poona and Parsis.

UQ: Were the Irani's mostly Parsi.

UR: No, they were Muslims, the Iranis. Actually my father had a company and his partner was Iranian, extremely good friend of my father and they used to come to our

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place, he and his family we used to go and there is a Parsi person he was also my father's partner when they had a company. He was also a very good friend of my father. We used to meet each other. In fact after my father died and my mother decided to live in Poona after my father's death, she went and I had to finish some of my research work in Mumbai so I lived in the Parsi family. He was like a guardian to me.

UQ: There were those groups... you didn't see people of Jewish ancestry there? That doesn't seem familiar?

UR: I didn't know anybody of the Jewish. No, no, no, in fact there was one girl, Nora, she was Jewish. Nora Ramrajkar. She was my classmate in college.

UQ: Interesting.

UR: My mother's teacher Mrs. Ezekiel, she was Jewish. And Nora later on I think she went to Israel but after the college, I don't know anything about her.

UQ: You lost touch.

UR: Yeah.

UQ: What about people of African descent?

UR: I didn't know anybody at that time, no.

UQ: Okay. I'm going to show you... well first I'm going to follow up and then I'll go back. Do you... did you hear about the groups that you didn't really interact with? You mentioned Iranians, you mentioned Parsis, you mentioned the Jews, I mentioned the Africans. Did you hear about—maybe, since you didn't interact with Africans directly—did you hear about their existence, did you know that there were people of African descent in India? I didn't know before.

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UR: No I, probably they were around but no I didn't know. Nobody. Americans and British people were there because of my father's company and business and they used to come and go I mean as visitors and some of them were very good friends of my father we used to meet them.

UQ: Okay. Growing up in India before you came here had you ever heard of Martin Luther King or Malcolm X some of the big Civil Rights leaders here?

UR: Yes I read about it.

UQ: In the newspapers?

UR: In the newspapers. I had some books and as I said I had my Master's degree from...

UQ: Berkeley.

UR: Berkeley. That was when Jack Kennedy was the President. He was assassinated at that time. So I heard about them.

UQ: Did you hear about them before you came?

UR: Yes I did.

UQ: So it was in the news. I heard that it was in the news in India as well.

UR: Yes.

UQ: What did you think of what was going on here? Especially because you hadn't, you know, prior to coming here, you know before you did your degree in Berkeley what did you think about this whole Civil Rights struggle?

UR: Those things are everywhere. So...

UQ: How do you mean?

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UR: Well anywhere you go you have the... like there are always others fighting between North and South [in the US] and we were in Europe at that time yeah we had heard about it. When we came to America there were civil rights over here. So...

UQ: What about in India were there similar struggles if it's everywhere?

UR: There are similar struggles there.

UQ: Were there those kinds of things then growing up did you hear about these kinds of tensions and if you did who were the groups?

UR: The Sikhs they want to have their own land. In the South [of India], in Madras they wanted to have their own state. So things like that do happen and it is something happens and it dies off you know.

UQ: So it died off over here as well right?

UR: Yeah.

UQ: What happened to make it die off over here do you know?

UR: I don't recall.

UQ: You don't know okay. Let's see. I have a map I want you to look at even though you probably don't need it because you are from there. But it is just a map of India and it has some of the cities labeled and you know the state divisions which are very...

UR: I need my glasses.

UQ: No I don't even want you to use your glasses because the state divisions are pretty new, the states were created in India in the 1940's with the creation of India. So before the states there were (at least in people's minds) there were some divisions, you know what the groups in India are. So if you had to, you know with your finger, make different regions how would you divide India, just three or four large areas that are different from

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each other? So if I looked at the United States I would make a line around the southern states, you know, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas.

UR: Actually each state is different in India because of the language.

UQ: Right.

UR: The is Maharashtra. Then Andhra is an entirely different language. There is Kerala, entirely different language. Madras area, that's entirely different language. I used to think these are all South Indians but they are not. If you call them as South Indians they don't like it. Andhras are Andhras because they speak a different language. Keralites, they speak a different language. Tamil Nadu, they speak a different language. Then there is Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, in which Hindi is spoken. Then in between is Madhya Pradesh, they speak a different language, Gujaratis speak a different language and Punjab, they speak a different language. Bengal, they speak a different language. Orissa, Bihar, they speak different language so with all the different languages each one is a state by itself.

UQ: Okay.

UR: But because of the English which had been there or Hindi, we communicate with each other.

UQ: Okay but does the language make these people so different from each other? Or are even, despite the different languages are some of them still similar?

UR: Even their eating habits are different.

UQ: Okay so you think that...

UR: South Indian food is different than Maharashtrian food. Punjabi food is entirely different from South Indian food. Maybe because the South Indians they live close to the

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coast. They have more coconut in their meals. But you will never find at all in North Indian food.

UQ: Sure.

UR: Because maybe coconut is very expensive, it's very rare. It's entirely different. Maharashtrian food is different. Gujarati food is different. Punjabi food is different. So food, language, customs. Customs are probably a little bit similar but there are differences too but I'm not that much aware.

Q: Are there some parts that are more similar?

UR: Probably Gujaratis and Maharashtrians probably are more similar, yes.

UQ: The language, do you speak Marathi in Maharashtra?

UR: We speak Marathi in Maharashtra. Gujarati in Gujarat.

UQ: So the two languages are similar or no, they are not?

UR: No, they are entirely different but they originate from Sanskrit so there are some common words but otherwise they are different.

UQ: Okay but you would say culturally there are some similarities between Gujaratis and Maharashtrians?

UR: Similar yeah probably.

UQ: Anyone else who is similar? Any other states like nearby to Maharashtra that is similar as well or no?

UR: No.

UQ: No okay...

UR: Even the way they dress is different.

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UQ: Yeah even within one state I would imagine there are different ways of dressing yeah?

UR: Probably but each state has a different way the way they wrap the saris around.

UQ: Yeah my sister likes the Gujarati style of saris. So these states I noticed the ones in the far eastern part of India they are very small. Do they have more in common with each other? Because Maharashtra is a big state.

UR: Bengal, Orissa... again the language is different. The way they wear their clothes, that's different. Their food habits are different. So I don't know much about it but they are different.

UQ: So you don't perceive like this area being like one region?

UR: I don't think so. I may be wrong.

UQ: No, there's no right or wrong I'm just asking your opinion. You don't think so. So you think each of those is a unique state and the state boundaries really create differences?

UR: Yes, yes.

UQ: You think those differences existed before the independence of India?

UR: Yes because they spoke different language.

UQ: So language is kind of the true divider between the different cultures?

UR: Yeah.

UQ: The different cultures. Okay interesting. Okay so the last thing I want to do we may be able to wrap up pretty quick. We talked about housing and you know you chose your, the neighborhood you lived in and I'm wondering about housing values. So I'm going to show you a series of pictures and if you can kind of rank how... which would

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most affect housing values in your opinion (there's no right answer) I just want to know your idea of who you think would affect the housing value, the property value in different areas. So [these are] people of all different backgrounds.*

UR: I'll try.

UQ: Okay. Maybe we should put it over here. Is it okay if I put it over here? This will be a little bit easier. So there's no order, I just—

UR: What are these?

UQ: They are just pictures of—I stuck with men mostly—and they are mostly middle class, a couple of younger people. But what I want you to do is who you think would affect housing value from most to least. You can change around the order.

UR: No I don't understand your question at all.

UQ: So when you buy a house it has a certain value, you know. But there are ideas when people move into the neighborhood maybe the house value will go up, maybe it will go down. People usually have these ideas.

UR: So I mean these people if they living in that area?

UQ: Yeah exactly. Like in our neighborhood there are a lot of Chinese are moving into the area. I don't know what people think because the Chinese are moving in will the property value go up or down. I don't know what they are thinking but they are thinking something.

UR: I wouldn't have that much idea but if people are professional probably the value would go up.

UQ: So you would put, who would you put at the top then?

UR: I don't know if this person is a professional.

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UQ: He is a professional, yeah.

UR: This one. And even Chinese are very hard working people.

UQ: Okay. So these you think would keep it at least the same or it would go up?

UR: I think so I may be wrong.

UQ: The level of education makes a difference?

UR: Yeah.

UQ: And so about these you're not so sure about these?

UR: I'm not sure.

UQ: Alright. Then I have one more similar type of exercise which I told you I'm trying to figure out kind of how people think about marriage for their children and you didn't have to do this as much because your kids eventually chose their own. But in some families it's very much arranged or its semi arranged. So at least for us the first step is to see a picture of the person. Then the mother usually decides, "Hmmm okay we'll pursue" or "No we're not going to do this." So I'm going to show you pictures of young women. All... by profession they are all teachers and how do you think this kind of from Maharashtra, like even your parents, how they would have chosen or ranked these women in that first step of the marriage process, the arranged marriage process? **

UR: These are all teachers?

UQ: They are all teachers. I wanted to make it simple, otherwise if I say doctor then it changes everything you know.

UR: Is this for my son?

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UQ: It could be for your son. Sure it could be your parents choosing for your brother.

We could do both. So maybe first you want to do if it was for your son how would you choose?

UR: Not a single one.

UQ: No! Why?

UR: No reason. At the most this one. No.

UQ: Is this because of the education because you think she has the most?

UR: Probably.

UQ: And if they are all similarly qualified, they are all teachers?

UR: Maybe...

UQ: Okay and what about your parents. Do you think they would have chosen differently?

UR: No, probably same way.

UQ: Same way?

UR: They probably would have looked at the family first. If I had to choose I would look at the family first.

UQ: Okay.

UR: And whether the girl's looks is kind of similar to my son's and whether they will like it or not whether she suits him or not.

UQ: Did he tell you?

UR: Even though the girl is very, very pretty... if my son is not good looking probably I wouldn't go for a very pretty girl.

UQ: Oh I see you want to find a match.

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UR: Something that matches with his looks, his ideas, his education. I mean if the girl is extremely well educated and earning a lot of money, no I don't want that.

UQ: I see.

UR: They say "if you have a nose ring, if the pearl is too big, you don't want to have that, you should be able to wear it properly." So [in Marathi], "there's a saying, the pearl should not be too big [for the nose]"

UQ: I see alright that makes sense.

UR: She's pretty but depends, she is a very pretty girl.

UQ: What makes her prettier than her?

UR: I probably wouldn't go for...myself for a black person because the... I don't know. I can't say. I do not want to say publically.

UQ: Sure, okay. I see what about her?

UR: If my son would have liked it, liked her I would have gone for that.

UQ: Okay alright that makes sense. What's wrong with them?

UR: Nothing is wrong with them. Again, my children they would have to like...

UQ: I see so you are trying to think what they would prefer.

UR: What they would prefer yes.

UQ: And do you think they would not prefer somebody who would (because obviously these are girls in India) they would prefer somebody from here?

UR: Probably yes.

UQ: Okay.

UR: Nothing is wrong with any of them.

UQ: No of course not.

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UR: They are all good.

UQ: We'll put those here for now. Maybe one or two more minutes. Do you have to get ready as well?

UR: No it's good, I have ten minutes.

UQ: Actually I think we are about done. The last question, what do you think when you read newspapers and think about American society broadly, what are the biggest problems that you think that American society faces today or is it perfect?

UR: Actually nothing is perfect and all societies have the problems so I cannot pinpoint one, as such.

UQ: Are the differences between India and U.S.?

UR: Same thing everywhere. So you have to pin point the question so that I can answer.

UQ: It's a very open ended question it's whatever you think the problems are today here.

UR: That's why it's kind of difficult to say. I mean I can say there is no problem at all I can say there's problems everywhere. The same thing I can say with the Indian community also. So difficult for me to answer this question.

UQ: So economic? I'm just suggesting something, randomly.

UR: No.

UQ: No not as much? What about moral, do we have any moral problems?

UR: Probably could be moral problems. I mean coming from Indian origin, the values that we have for the moral things, probably moral is my first choice to say.

UQ: Okay. Alright...

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UR: But again you cannot generalize because I have seen some of the American families, they really give high value to the moral values.

UQ: Yeah, I agree.

UR: So I cannot make a general statement.

UQ: Same thing in India?

UR: Even the economy I cannot make it as a general statement. Same thing in India.

UQ: Morals? Same thing in India?

UR: Same thing some are very liberal so you know.

UQ: Do you consider yourself very liberal?

UR: I wouldn't say very liberal but yes I am.

UQ: What is "very liberal?"

UR: When you don't care for the peer pressure or social pressure about anything and just do whatever you like. Now I do care what other people think, what the values are what we have taught and I would like.... I would like to say that I would like to remain so that nobody else points anything at me or talk about me. I don't want to be the talk of the people that's all.

UQ: Okay.

UR: Just be good with everybody, be friendly with everybody and stay like that, and I expect the same thing from my children.

UQ: And the way they treat other people and the choices they make for themselves?

UR: Yes.

UQ: Okay that sounds like a good way of ending it. I like that ending. Do you want to add anything else?

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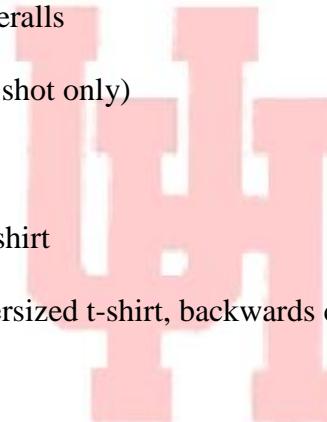
UR: No that's it.

UQ: Alright thank you so much.

End of Interview

* UR's Rankings for the Housing Values Test (see pgs. 45-6, above):

1. Chinese man on cordless phone
2. African American man in a suit
3. White man in a suit
4. White man in denim work overalls
5. African American man (head shot only)
6. Latino man in a field
7. White man in a plaid flannel shirt
8. African American man in oversized t-shirt, backwards cap, and baggy jeans



** UR's Rankings for the Potential Marital Partners Test (see pgs 46-9, above)

1. Indian woman, fairest skin tone
2. Indian woman with school book and bag, fair skin
3. White woman, light blond hair, makeup
4. African American woman in library, medium skin tone
5. East Asian woman [head shot]
6. White woman, dark blond hair, no makeup
7. Indian woman with small bindi, med-dark skin
8. Indian woman with large bindi and kumkum, med-darker skin

9. African American woman, dark skin

