

**"Till now whenever we've gone out together, obviously it's only the women who come up to him. But the funniest thing is, the fan following either comprises of really young kids or aunties, mummies and *buas* and all. I haven't come across other women" - Sneha**

outside my house at the ATM and I was going to *Just Around The Corner* to meet my friends. When I saw him, I thought okay, that's a good-looking guy. Later when he came up to me at the restaurant, I was like, oh my God, this is Iqbal after three years. Then, just before New Year's, I called him up to ask him what he was doing. Since he wasn't doing anything, I invited him over. He was hesitant at first but eventually he came. That night, we caught up on various things, but for my friends and me he was just the video guy. Like a true gentleman, he dropped us home in the night. And then we just kept meeting."

She goes to add; "I knew there was something between us though. The next day when we met after New Year's, it was a little surprising. Because Iqbal lived in Andheri and I in Bandra. So the entire idea of coming from Andheri to Bandra just to meet me, I'm not a fool not to think anything. It was practically a long-distance thing. But obviously you need to know the person before you jump into anything; that was the point of meeting everyday."

When did they realize that this had turned into something that was long-term? "Are you doubting that I'm a good guy? The first time she met me, she looked at me and she knew," jokes Iqbal. Sneha then declares, "I really don't know a particular date or time when it happened. After a few months of meeting everyday and doing everything together, not just as a couple but as friends too, that's when we realized that this is definitely going somewhere. It wasn't just two people dating and then tata-bye bye."

Adds Iqbal, "I obviously didn't think it was long-term always. As I got to know her, I realized she was very homely and basically, a nice person. I consider myself very lucky."

The realization that Sneha was the woman he wanted to spend the rest of his life with dawned on Iqbal after about a year-and-a-half. "When you're in a relationship, when it's serious, it means you're in love. She comes from a very disciplined family; I come from a small town. And my openings in life have always been small. I still have that small-town thinking."

Sneha is quick to add, "At the end of the day, every



man is looking for a nice, homely girl to settle down with. Someone who can take care of him and his family."

He agrees, "See, I've always lived away from my family. First I was in boarding school, then in Delhi to finish college, then Mumbai for work. Sometimes, you just get sick of it. That's when you need someone to look after you."

What about family opposition? "We were damn scared; we would keep thinking what if mama comes to know? She's going to give Sneha a bashing. What if *nana* comes to know? But both mama and *nana* were absolutely fine. Even when my parents and sister came to know about it, they were so cool about it."

Says Sneha; "We realized that there wasn't any opposition only after we broke the news to our parents. His parents are from a small town so this would be a big thing for them. But the way they took it was really surprising; both of us were really glad."

Iqbal explains, "I have two sisters myself so I know what a girl's mother would think of something like this. Actor *ladka hai, yeh hai, woh hai*. I'm a very transparent guy and I would make sure that I met her everyday so that her mom would know it's serious."

Did they face any religious differences? Sneha relates, "I was really scared actually, and not because I come from a conservative family or anything. I was very worried my mom would say he's from a different religion; he's from another town plus he's an actor. What do you think you're doing? But my mom always