



WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23

Couple of problems extended by family

Wedding Sari Showdown 2
 8pm, SBS

HAVING an extended family has its pros and cons. On the plus side, the family is always there to give you advice or a helping hand. On the minus, well, the family is always there to give you advice or a helping hand, whether you want it or not.

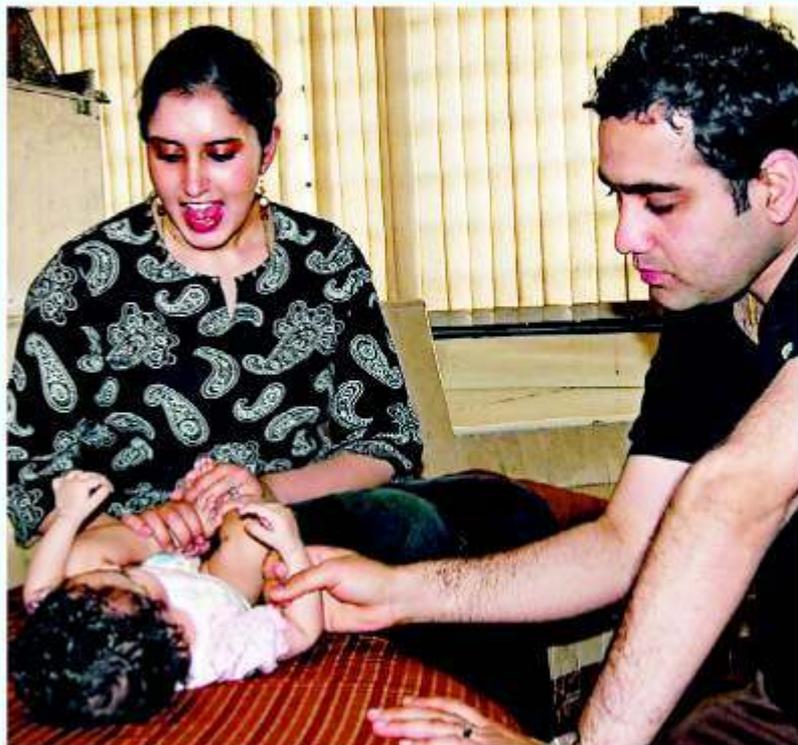
Wedding Sari Showdown, originally aired in 2005, was presented as culture clash, as Sikh-Australian Ramona and her Marwari husband Anurag had to appease two Indian families, each with its own cultural traditions, as well as remaining true to their lives in Melbourne after they married.

But family transcends culture, as the film homes in on the difficulty of balancing tradition and family involvement with individual desires.

This follow-up episode picks up as the couple await the arrival of their first child. Once again Ramona butts heads with her in-laws as her mother-in-law Rajini arrives from India to help before the birth, but then falls ill, which complicates matters.

Admittedly, not all first-time parents have to deal with the added pressure of a new baby guaranteeing its grandfather a place in heaven, but most people with children will recognise the bind in which Ramona and Anurag find themselves. As wonderful an experience as having a baby is, it's also exhausting, so extra pairs of hands are welcome.

On the other hand, parents and in-laws have outdated notions on parenting: here it's the suggestion that Ramona needs to drink ghee in her milk, but in other situations it can be more serious. Some cultures traditionally sleep heavily clothed babies on their stomachs, when we now know overheating and sleeping posi-



When culture and family collide: New parents Ramona and Anurag

They have to deal with a baby ensuring its grandfather a place in heaven

tion are factors in sudden infant death syndrome. And with someone constantly helping, or even taking over, it can be hard for a new mother and father to get in tune with their baby and its needs, as well as develop confidence in what they're doing.

Of course it doesn't help that Ramona and Anurag's baby is unwell, so it's no surprise the family eventually decides to go to India where there is family support and servants to help. As always, such decisions come at a cost.

Cramming so much of life into two 30-minute episodes is a big ask, and

as a consequence it's hard not to wish that filmmaker Kylie Boltin had slowed down to explain and explore things in more detail. It almost breezes over the nature of the baby's illness, and the family appears to move between Australia and India as though they are mere suburbs apart.

It's also inevitable that seeing themselves in the first program will have influenced the participants and presumably led them to modify their behaviour.

But, for the most part, their story remains compelling and honest.

Kerrie Murphy