
Conventional Notions of Beauty in Social Media

How does one grow healthy in an era of size zero, corsets, slimming oils and anonymity on social media? For girls the most significant social pressure they face today is to conform to conventional notions of beauty. Eshaa, a second year student at Delhi University, studying philosophy stays with her mom, her elder brother and her dog in Gurugram.

As early as first grade, she started comparing herself to other girls, she thought they were more popular, prettier, thinner, smarter, more interesting. "I remember just really wanting to be someone else" Eshaa said. "Even innocently- just spending a day as someone else. But that thought became more intrusive and obsessive as I grew older" Eshaa resorted to self harm, a strategy some teenagers use to try and deal with their emotions, or even punish themselves. "I started burning the inside of my arms with my hair straightener" Eshaa sighed. "I started skipping meals, hoping that would help me loose some kilos. " Her mother noticed her becoming irritable, weak and she saw Eshaa loose her charm, her grades had gone low and they were all worried about her mental and physical health.

As she entered grade 10, she strategically channelized her time and efforts towards her academics, she got off all social media platforms, started reading, attending power yoga and spoke to other girls of her age coming to realize that she was not the only one who felt insecure about her body, her shape. So soon after her senior school, Eshaa started a help group for girls who were fat-shamed, who felt they were not enough because they didn't look like the girls who had millions of followers on Instagram, girls who were trolled online for posting pictures even though they didn't have an hourglass figure. She also gave away her cell number and counselled people over phone. When adults found out, they told her to stop immediately, terrified that amateurs might inadvertently do harm. "I had no training- it was really reckless on my part," Eshaa said.

"At that time I saw it as heroic. Now a part of me thinks I was trying to save them because I couldn't save myself. " However, Eshaa considers herself recovered now. "If I'm hungry, I eat," she said. "I don't know the last time I weighed myself. I don't think or care about the calories no more. "Studies show that although maintaining a certain body image is healthier for the adulthood life to come, but manier times information can be extremely misleading specially now in the E gloabal world, where all kinds of information good and decepring are available, and the youth ends up in a trap.

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