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All for a selfie!

Rajitha Menon April 30, 2016, DHNS:



Some days you just have to create your own happiness and currently, a good way to do that is to take a selfie and post it on social media websites. Selfies have caught the fancy of the entire world and are perhaps the most debated social phenomenon in recent times. What started as a harmless trend of clicking your own pictures and posting them on social media soon shifted track in a more dangerous direction where people started losing lives in their pursuit of the perfect photo.

The trend has reached manic proportions, especially in India, which has the most selfie-related deaths worldwide, according to a study. Youngsters have died while attempting to take selfies in front of speeding trains or on top of 60-foot ravines and yet, there is no dip in the popularity of this particular trend.

So what is it about selfies that has people hooked on to them? "It makes me feel confident about myself, my personality and my attire. It is like looking into a mirror and loving what you see so much that you want to share it with your friends and family," says Rajath Kamath, an avid selfie taker.

"I always take selfies to capture a special moment so that later I can remember how happy I felt," says Gouri Varma, a student. "All my friends on Facebook or Instagram can see what I am doing; I feel connected to them in many ways," she adds.

From the general population to celebrities, no one has remained immune to the lure. Dwayne 'The Rock' Johnson set a world record when he took 105 selfies in 3 minutes. But not everyone is cheering it and critics have much to say.

"I get irritated when people keep uploading their selfies; I don't understand this fascination for your own face," says Lini John, a professional. "It makes you attach undue importance to your physical appearance. Even when someone goes on a trip, they are more interested in clicking their own pictures rather than observing the beauty of nature."

Kala Balasubramanian, a psychologist, agrees. "In selfies, the scenery becomes the background and we become the subject and therefore, the highlight. This leads to our narcissistic tendencies being developed or aggravated," she says. "We become too self-focussed and self-absorbed. In some cases, selfies have also been linked to negative body image. I have known people who went into depression when their selfies did not garner enough likes on Facebook."

In a world where body image is extremely important and one's opinion of their self is based on others' opinions, maybe a selfie is important because it gives one the power to depict themselves the way they desire. The resultant ego boost is hard to ignore and the time may not be far away when 'believe in your self' becomes 'believe in your selfie!'

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