



WOMEN AND BODY IMAGE

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Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well being not merely the absence of disease or infirmity(WHO1948).The major components of body image influencing the human functioning include desire to lose weight, look beautiful, healthy and energetic with productive and good performance. The body dissatisfaction or negative body image has been reported to play important role in the development of obesity, depression and psychological disturbances of various sorts.

According to study that women are less satisfied with their body. Women hate their body more ever before with image issue reaching a critical level on global scale .According to a new report commissioned by Dove, a staggering 89% of Australian women are opting to cancel plans, job interviews, or other important engagements simply because of how they look.

The report suggests that the obsession with body image is having a serious impact on how women conduct themselves in the workplace with just five in ten sticking to their opinions or decisions based on how they look that day.

A new cross-cultural research highlights the reality that low self-esteem prevents many women from fully engaging in life says Dr. Susan Paxton ,who was involved many pressures to conform to beauty in deals, one of every Australian women report they feel worse about themselves after looking at images of attractive women in magazines. Approximately nine out of ten young Australian women have dieted at least once in their lives.

Western societies introduce the concept of a slim and slender body for females as the symbol of physical attractive and beauty. Women and men all over the world seem to be in favor one ideal body type, that is, a slim, tall and perfectly proportionate body. Women are influenced by what they see every day on T.V, Internet and foreign print magazines. The influence is visible by the change in health consciousness and body weight among women who make efforts to

change how they look. The huge boom in the beauty industry and slimming clubs are testimony of this change. Women have a close relationship with their bodies since they have been looked at as objects of sexuality and their bodies treated as a medium of culture.

Body image is the result of many factors interacting with each other such as Physical, Social, Psychological, Hormonal and Environmental factor;& It is influenced by many factors such as Culture, Age, Gender & Weight.

Teenager and body image

Today, female bodies, particularly among girls have become a source of distress and self-criticism, (Brumberg, 1988; Fredrickson & Robert, 1997) rather than a natural and pleasurable source of vitality, agency, and mastery.

Desire to become thin is higher in adolescent girls, even in those who already perceived their body image as too thin. Adolescence is a period of increased awareness of bodily cues & self-reflection, including evaluation of body and appearance.

A negative body image is very common among young-adult females. It has been found that “The prevalence of eating disorder development among college females is especially high, with rates up to 24% among college students”. A study suggests that physical appearance and body image may influence perceived health. Negative body image has been associated with social anxiety (Cash & Fleming, 2002), poor self-esteem (Kostanski & Gullone, 1998) and impaired sexual functioning (Wiederman, 2002). How we feel about our bodies can have an effect on our social functioning (Cash & Fleming, 2002; Rosen, 1998) and can also influence our relationships with other (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002).

A negative body image can arise when a person feels that their looks do not measure up to what society, family, friends, and the media expect. They may frequently compare themselves with others, and they may feel inadequate when doing so. They feel ashamed, embarrassed, and lacking in confidence. They often feel uncomfortable and awkward in their body. The most common forms of eating disorders include Anorexia nervosa, Bulimia nervosa, Binge eating, Purging eating disorders and affect both females and male. Eating disorders can develop during any stage in life but typically during the teen years or young adulthood. Some people develop a disorder known as body dysmorphic disorder (BDD). A person with BDD sees their body or part of their body, in a negative way. They may ask for cosmetic surgery to “correct” their nose size, for example, when to everyone else, it appears normal. This can be dangerous if it leads to mental

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health problems, such as depression. The person may pursue unnecessary surgery, unsafe weight-loss habits, such as a crash diet.

It is commonly believed that women are likely than men to be dissatisfied with their bodies. A study found that women's attitude to their body image tends to remain stable throughout their lifespan, although the importance of **shape**, weight, and appearance decrease with age.

Studies report that over 80% of women wanted to lose weight even though only 1.4% of them were overweight. Also 50% of the girl who diet are of normal weight and 62% of all girls are dissatisfied with their body (Bentley, 1999). As a result, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services reported that, 91% of women are mostly unhappy with their bodies.

Indian women and body image

In India, with the advent of modernization, eating and weight concerns are increasing alarmingly among urban adolescent girls as a consequence of the rising incidence of body fat, although a plump body shape is preferred in traditional Indian culture. Indian culture does not place much emphasis on dieting and food is symbol of nurturance. However, this milieu is clearly changing and emaciated models are as much in vogue here, as they are in the west. Advertisement in India today have models who depict a certain ideal of beauty, which is closer to those portrayed by the western media. Advertising industry is aiming to create a different look—that of a westernized, fair, blonde, light-eyed, slim and high cheek-boned young

Women says Bishaksa Datta, head of point of view, a Mumbai-based NGO. A few studies show that Indian adolescent girls express a milder form of weight dissatisfaction with added extreme fear of fatness and subsequently attempt to achieve a slim and trim body shape by following various weight-loss measures. Therefore, it seems that unhealthy weight-related behaviors seriously affect their physical and mental abilities at this vulnerable phase of growth.

An Indian woman was represented as a home maker, a wife, a mother and a perfect daughter in law belonging to a rigid joint family system; a common way of living in many Indian households. "The traditional image of womanhood emphasized the women as the complementary of men in the context of the family that was central to social continuity" (Jain and Mahan 1996: 44). The body of women was morphed in accordance to the accepted social ideals of the time and not with their individual will. Every change in the body shape was for the sole aim of attracting male attention and generating male approval. In contrast to the rest of the world where women

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have the freedom to change their body shape according to their individual beliefs and choices, women in India were dictated on what type of body shape they should have by others which usually meant the husband, father and other male members of the family. This visible hold on women is explained by Jain and Mahan (1996) because of certain 'images' attributed to women. The image of the Indian women has always been depicted as a devoted wife, loyal, benevolent and in humble service to the dominant husband. The Indian women body was useful for procreation and a good woman was one who bore many sons to the family. Ideas of feminine beauty were already long in place from ancient India and the evidence of this is inherent from the preserved sculptures and paintings on female bodies. In the case of India, there are very few studies and findings on the body as compared to other parts of the world and this makes the task of analysing the problems faced by women more hard. Unlike its Western counterparts, the studies on body image issues in India are very limited and inadequate. Even feminists in India have withdrawn from addressing issues related to the female body and the reason for this abstinence is explained by Meenakshi Thapan as, "it may also be the case problematic or deserving their particular attention in the face of more striking issues such as poverty, women's rights, violence against women, and so on"

Some Tips for improving body image

Working and making regular exercises increased the body image. There is also evidence that exercise improve body image, even though body weight and shape do not change.

Celebrate what your body can do: run, swim, dance, and sing and so on.

List 10 things you like about yourself and pin it up where you can see it.

Stop comparing yourself to other. Love and appreciate your body.

Replace negative thoughts with positive ones.

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