

Psychology behind the blue whale challenge

What is the issue?

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- There has been rising number of deaths worldwide and in India in the name of Blue Whale Challenge.

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- It calls for understanding the idea behind getting attracted to such life-threatening games.

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What is the Blue Whale Challenge?

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- The game is a series of 50 challenges that must be completed over 50 days, with the last one being to kill oneself.

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- Each player is assigned a moderator to assign the task for the day.

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- The moderator takes the players through the process of executing the challenge, including the last task.

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- Reports have stated that players are not allowed to withdraw and that the moderators ensure compliance by the players.

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- The game is preying upon young, impressionable minds and eventually leading to their death.

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What pushes children into this?

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- **Parenting** - The drawbacks in present parenting style and reducing social

time with the parents, increases the children's time spent on digital devices.

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- The game gives the children what they don't have in real life; the warmth, understanding, and connections.

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- Children feel being under the spotlight while playing game, contrary to the isolation in real life.

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- **Mental health taboo** - India still considers seeking help for mental health issues a taboo.

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- While this is the condition with adults themselves, guiding a child appropriately in mental health issues is even more challenging.

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- Guidance from a mental health professional is a least thought out option.

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- Given this, games like the Blue Whale challenge, offer the players - the children and teenagers in their privacy, the attention and validation that they yearn for.

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- **Role of schools** - Schools are as integral a part of shaping a child's psyche as parenting is.

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- Kids being isolated in schools for various reasons are often unnoticed by the teachers and the management.

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- Counselling professionals being part of the school and addressing these issues are very rare, especially in the Indian context.

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- The isolated children seeking social approval and acceptance, are attracted to the options where they are given these.

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What is the psychology behind creating this?

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- Psychologists worldwide feel that people are increasingly turning to external sources of validation.

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- Increasing social or domestic isolation attracts many to games like the Blue Whale Challenge.

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- The moderators of the game exploit this social weakness of the young minds.
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- The creator of the game admitted that the victims of the game are 'biological waste' and that he was 'cleansing the society'.
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What is the way forward?

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- This dark side of the internet impacting children's life calls for attention to our transforming social system.
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- Child psychology, parenting, social support system, etc should be brought under government's policy focus to build a healthy society and put an end to games engulfing lives.
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Source: Indian Express

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