



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.
- 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.
- Each player is assigned a moderator to assign the task for the day.
- The moderator takes the players through the process of executing the challenge, including the last task.
- Reports have stated that players are not allowed to withdraw and that the moderators ensure compliance by the players.
- 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.
- The game gives the children what they don't have in real life; the warmth, understanding, and connections.
- Children feel being under the spotlight while playing game, contrary to the isolation in real life.
- **Mental health taboo** - India still considers seeking help for mental health issues a taboo.
- While this is the condition with adults themselves, guiding a child appropriately in mental health issues is even more challenging.
- Guidance from a mental health professional is a least thought out option.
- 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.
- **Role of schools** - Schools are as integral a part of shaping a child's psyche as parenting is.
- Kids being isolated in schools for various reasons are often unnoticed by the teachers and the management.
- Counselling professionals being part of the school and addressing these issues are very rare, especially in the Indian context.
- 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.
- Increasing social or domestic isolation attracts many to games like the Blue

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Whale Challenge.

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- The moderators of the game exploit this social weakness of the young minds.
- 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.
- 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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