

Reed thin is unhealthy and 'un Indian', says health lobby

Ultra thin is not in. Size-zero bodies a la Kareena Kapoor may look good on Page 3 and entertainment colour spreads, but they are pushing Indian women towards excessive dieting, and what's more, being 'un Indian', aver doctors and nutritionists.

France is said to be planning a ban on media images glamourising skinny women after researchers found enough evidence to 'implicate' media role in heightening women's concern about their bodies.

University of Wisconsin researcher Shelly Grabe and psychology professor Janet Hyde have found that ultra-thin images of actresses and models made women resort to unhealthy practices like excessive dieting. They analysed 77 previous studies involving over 15,000 subjects.

In India, the media has been starry-eyed about Kareena's lean looks in her recent release 'Tashan'. This trend is an about-turn from earlier decades when Bollywood prided itself on its well-endowed curvaceous women, the symbol of traditional Indian femininity.

The industry's first 'size zero' female lead, Kareena Kapoor, 28, is causing worry to nutritionists and experts. They fear that the Western standard of reed thin bodies may pose psychological and health problems to millions of young women in the country who look up to Bollywood as their role models.

Kapoor lost several pounds for 'Tashan' to fit into irreverent denim cut-off and skimpy bustiers. The actress says the 'lean mean look' which the movie demanded was the result of power yoga and a special 'ultra-slim' diet.

But critics and doctors have hit out, saying the measurements were 'un-Indian'.

'Indian women must understand that no matter how flattering thin bodies of actresses and models may seem to be, but their general body frame is not genetically designed to suit such a structure,' Parul Chudhary, a freelance dietician, told IANS.

She added that going on crash diets definitely helps people in achieving quick results, but it is not a healthy practice.

'It is important to eat right and at the right time. Six small meals in a day with 15 to 20 glasses of water during summer and 30 minutes of exercise would help one to be healthy and fit,' she suggested.

Sanjay Pattanayak, psychiatry and de-addiction consultant at Vidyasagar Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (VIMHANS), feels that no matter how many times people are told not to copy these celebrities, they would still do it.

Adolescents are the worst hit in such pursuits, he says.

'I feel these ultra-slim figures of celebrities greatly influence teenagers and those around 20 years of age,' Pattanayak said.

'Ten to 20 years back, actresses were not as thin and so not many people used to be influenced by

them. But now since there is a lot of glamour attached and the attitude of the Indian youngsters are changing, they are increasingly being affected by whatever the celebrity models and actors do,' Pattanayak added.

Aanchal Oberoi, a Delhi-based model, says women should not blindly follow trends set by models and actresses. She said it is important for models to stay thin and physically fit so that they get good work.

'A person should be comfortable with his/her body type. If you think you look good when thin or slightly plump, you should be like that and not be thin just because a model or actress looks good like that,' she said.

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