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# Image Conscious Youths Opts for Cosmetic Surgery Before Marriage

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Ragini, a 24-year-old Delhi resident, went for a nose job before her parents could arrange a match for her. With a sharper nose, she felt much more confident of finding a handsome husband. "Earlier my nose used to be a bit flat. I went for a cosmetic surgery to lift it so that it looks sharp. Now I feel much more comfortable and confident as well," she said.

Like her, image conscious youngsters in India's metropolitan cities are going for a plastic makeover before marriage, with cosmetic surgeons saying the trend is witnessing a 25 percent growth.

"Today, marriage is a market where girls and boys are treated as products. Girls with good looks can easily find a better half who is tall, handsome and rich as well," said Ragini.

Anup Dhir, a senior cosmetic surgeon of Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in the capital, told IANS: "These days both guys and girls want to look beautiful

and sport a perfect physique. The desire to look good is very much a trend among youngsters before their marriage.

"Generally would-be grooms and brides go for lip beautification, a nose lift or removal of scars from their faces. Some come to remove dark circles, pimple marks and those who are more conscious go for a breast augmentation."

He said cosmetic surgery is popular among women, but men are not far behind. "I get a number of guys who go for hair transplantation before they enter the matchmaking process. I feel the male-female ratio going for plastic surgery would be one man for every three women," he said.

While a nose lift can cost anything from Rs.25,000 to Rs.45,000, correcting lips costs somewhere between Rs.10,000 and Rs.15,000. Vivek Kumar, a cosmetic surgeon at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here, said cosmetic surgery is common among urban set ups across the country.

"Earlier only rich people used to go for such surgeries but now even middleclass families are coming for such treatments. Peer pressure, the desire to stand out among others and definitely growing disposable income is fuelling the trend," Kumar said. "Youngsters with excessive fat on their belly and thighs are also putting themselves under the knife for a better look. Some even get inspired by the film industry," he said, adding that even school students were not hesitating about it.

Kumar said every month he gets over 50 patients who want to go for such treatments. Dhir said: "I get some 50 to 60 queries a month but 15 to 20 people come for surgery. I think there is a 25 to 30 percent increase in such surgeries. It's becoming a lifestyle demand."

He also said his clients were in the age group of 20 to 30, with quite a few of them hailing from the call centre crowd. While enlarging breasts costs a girl not less than Rs.80,000, removing extra flab costs between Rs.40,000 and Rs.60,000. Men who go for hair graft pay at least Rs.150 for every hair implantation.

"In the case of hair transplantation, we take hair from the back of the ears and in three months' time a patients gets result. In case of other surgeries we use tissues of the same person for corrective measures but burn scars need skin from places like the thigh to get the desired results," Dhir said.

Of course, not everyone is happy with the trend.

"This is certainly an urban phenomenon and many youngsters have an inferiority complex about their own looks. They are never satisfied and go for an image makeover," psychologist Aroona Broota said.

"People don't consider marriage as a ceremony to unite two souls any more. In the marriage market, humans are turning products and in the race to achieve false beauty, they do all sorts of makeovers." Advising youngsters not to go under the knife, she said: "Let's be happy with what god has given us. There is no point thinking about our outer looks rather than becoming a good human being."

Source: IANS

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