

DELHI
The Age

Macho men take a back seat

BY SHRUTI BADYAL

Breaking the eternal myth that the male species loves being perceived as attractive, sexually active or 'lady-killers'; findings based on an international study recently revealed that most men want respect, a harmonious family life and good relationships with their partner. Interestingly, the "macho man" tag is no longer macho.

"A woman gets to know who you are in 10 minutes," claims model and actor Milind Soman. For someone like Milind, who rules over the hearts of many around the globe, a macho image is something that cannot be projected. He says, "Men today know that they've got to be original. I feel that the best thing to be is 'real'. If you're macho, it will show. If you're sensitive, it will show as well. Trying to look honourable and caring won't work for long if you're not that kind."

According to the study, a majority of the men ranked a healthy lifestyle and compatibility with their partners over mere self-fulfilling or sexual concerns. "I've always been a shy guy and I feel that once a man grows up, a sense of responsibility and the need to be respected and be in a meaningful relationship arises on its own. Macho is something that is too frivolous a term for me. While I do agree that there must be many women who are attracted towards macho men, personally it has always been a frail way of projecting oneself," says

model-turned-actor Muzzamil Ibrahim.

However, experts believe that the drive for projecting themselves as honourable and self-reliant depends on many factors such as one's temperament, profession and social environment. Dr Sameer Malhotra Head of Department of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy at Fortis

Hospital reveals, "There is always an urge in people to be accepted and be known in their social groups. More importantly, what we see happening around us becomes a social norm. I don't think one can generalise if men want to be perceived as family oriented, or as studs chasing women. It totally depends on the kind of social set-up that

you are a part of and the profession that you are into. Also, the temperament of a person plays a very important role in what they want to project themselves as."

Well, it's not just the perception of men that rules the entire study. What is more engaging is the outlook of women, which also seems to be changing. "Women today are smart and well educated. They want to be in a stable relationship rather than being with men who are merely lady killers. Independent and strong-headed women are ruling today, and they need substance in a relationship. This makes the 'macho image' take a back seat," says Dr Samir Parikh consultant psychiatrist Max Healthcare.

"In today's time macho men get the young girls, the ones that want to have their fun in life. Sensitive men get the more responsible women, the ones that want to stay with you for life," says Gaurav Balani, musician, indicating that the priorities of both men and women have changed with time.

"Gender stereotypes have changed over the years," says Dr Megha Hazuria Gore, clinical psychologist, Max Health Care. She adds, "Stereotypes are no longer applicable in today's world. Times have changed. Initially, there was a notion that men should be strong to physically protect women. But that ideology doesn't apply to the women of today, who don't need protective men as physical comforts. Both the sexes are looking for deeper aspects of a long-term relationship."

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