

Do We Need An International Men's Day?



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Read on to find out...

We know that there are many people who will be wondering why we need to celebrate **International Men's Day** today—considering the world is mostly male-dominated/driven—and the society at large is mostly stacked in men's favour. **International Men's Day is not for anti-feminism rants. Instead, it's about taking a day to shed light on the issues that men have to deal with thanks to the very narrow definitions of masculinity!**

Let's look objectively at why we need to celebrate this day and address some key issues.

MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS TOO



There's a lot of stigma attached to [mental health](#), especially in India. Men and women are both affected by mental illness, but men are less likely to seek help compared to women. Around the world, the most common cause of death for men under 50 is Suicide.

Mumbai-based clinical psychologist and psychotherapist, Varkha Chulani explains, “The idea of being ‘manly’ is being unemotional. As a result of this stereotype, if a man talks about his emotions it’s construed as an unmanly thing. He is labelled a ‘womanly man’, effeminate, sissy and what have you. To avoid these labels and being viewed as feminine, they run away from their feelings and emotions.”

Men are so socially conditioned to do this. The male members of the family/community, teach explicitly that it’s okay for men to express anger, but not sadness. The real-men-don’t-cry ridiculing is damaging too. The stereotype that ‘strong men keep it together’ keeps most men from discussing their feelings openly—which prevents many from seeking the help and counselling they need. So, men need to know that: It’s okay NOT to be okay, and ask for help!

MEN DON'T HAVE TO FIT INTO A BOX



[Image Credit: Mark Bryan]

Like women, men are diverse too. Not all men fit into that stereotype of macho, alpha male with muscles. It's far harder for men to be vulnerable because that is acting outside their prescribed gender role. So, it's good to have a day that celebrates male diversity and reminds us that all men don't have to be imprisoned by stereotypes in the way that women don't have to either! What we are trying to say is, you can seek therapy and still be masculine OR still be straight and manly AF in a pair of stilettos and a skirt! Mark Bryan (ref image) is a straight, happily married robotic engineer and model from Germany. He loves Porsches and heels!

TOXIC MASCULINITY IS AN OPPRESSOR OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN



The women’s civil rights movement is a beneficiary for men too. The more you tear down the systems that damage women, the more you bring down the systems that suppress men! However, confusing toxic traits with genuine needs won’t help. Assuming all men should reject masculinity can be as unhelpful as assuming all men need to hold ‘manly’ jobs, build houses and become fathers. Men do have parenting rights, do suffer domestic abuse and do have unmet mental health needs. We should be able to celebrate differences rather than demonising them.

YOU HAVE TO TREAT ALL GENDERS AS EQUALS



Equality is not equality if it's not for everyone. It's as simple as that. It's important to remember and champion the rights of marginalised groups within men—LGBT+ men and other groups must all be a part of the future of masculinity. Gender parity can only be achieved if all of us work in solidarity towards a common goal.

While the above points are just the tip of the iceberg and should perhaps help in flagging off bigger conversation, it's important to remember that—**International Men's Day** is more than a day for celebrating men, just as **International Women's Day** is more than just a celebration of the women in your life! **Both these days SHOULD BE about—highlighting and getting closer to tackling the systemic issues that let down these genders.**

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