

Parents of minor who jumped to death deny links to 'Blue Whale' challenge

DNA, Page 3 - 2nd August 2017

Parents of minor who jumped to death deny links to 'Blue Whale' challenge

Imran Fazal imran.fazal@dnaindia.net

The Meghwadi police on Monday night approached the parents of Manpreet Sahans, a 14-year-old, who on Saturday allegedly jumped to death from the building in which his family resides. While the police has not found any evidence to confirm a direct link, the police are probing whether the suicide was connected to the deadly Blue Whale challenge, an online suicide game which has killed over 130 participants in Russia.

Speaking to DNA, the father of the teenager said the death of his son was not connected to the Blue Whale challenge and urged that rumours should not be spread unnecessarily.

"We are in a state of shock and are completing the family rituals. Everyone should stop spreading rumours about the game so that no other child gets affected and influenced due to this incident," Manpreet's father Jaspal Singh said.

A close relative who had attended the last rituals said, "After this incident, teenagers in our family have started to Google the Blue Whale Challenge. The family will request the police to come out with a statement to clarify that the death is not linked with Blue Whale Challenge and we are waiting for the police to complete their investigations."

Meghwadi police sources said they were now probing whether



Everyone should stop spreading rumours about the game so that no other child gets affected and influenced due to this incident.

Jaspal Singh, father

the teenager was following an order from an administrator promoting a shorter version of the challenge online, and have seized electronic gadgets which will be sent for forensic analysis.

As part of their probe, the Meghwadi police checked Manpreet's school bag and books to check whether he wrote or scribbled anything related to the challenge. A geometry box which had a rounder and cutter was examined to find if it had any blood stains. The police have taken the statements of the teenager's parents and friends.

"We are checking his gadgets. Moreover, we are also probing if a shorter version of Blue Whale challenge was played by the youth," said a senior police officer from Meghwadi police division.

Manpreet, a class 9 student of Bombay Cambridge school, wrote to his friends on social media: 'Soon the only thing you would be left with is a picture of me' before leaping to death from his building terrace.

Parents must warn kids beforehand, say experts

Imran Fazal imran.fazal@dnaindia.net

Experts believe that parents of teenagers should directly communicate with their children about the perils of the 'Blue Whale challenge' rather than wait for them to get curious about the deadly online game.

Parents and teachers should also play a pro-active role in identifying if a child is involved in violent and self-harming games online. The child will behave differently in terms of his personal life and academic life, experts said. Immediate attention should be given if they find the behaviour of their child to be suspicious.

Nirali Bhatia, cyber psychologist, said, "Parents should come forward and speak to their children directly about the game. The child's behaviour should be monitored from time to time and web activities should be controlled."

"The WiFi and router should have parental controls and children should not be allowed to play adult and aggressive games online," added Bhatia.

