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Editorial

The tradition of projecting into their offspring their likes and dislikes, just like the transmission of titles and property, plays a primary role in the parents' socialization of children. Consciously or unconsciously, the children absorb the parents' ideas and manners. At a certain age, they may develop a sense of revolt against the parents' possessiveness, but the atmosphere of the home, which predominates their early years, leaves its stamp on them and determines the molding of their personalities.

The most important trait which parents try to inculcate in their children is a spirit of competition, which usually implies a certain hostility and defiance to other people. The child is viewed as an individual struggling against, not with, his associates. The primitive traits of jealousy and desire to accumulate and store objects are encouraged as sure motivations of effort and success. It does not occur to the parents that love and cooperation might yield better fruit than rivalry and vehemence.

"My son must grow to be an 'abadaye' (i. e. a successfull fighter), an aggressive, fierce man. Otherwise, I shall slay him on a moonless night!" Statements of this sort are rashly uttered by boastful fathers, unmindful of the effect that such words may leave on youthful spirits. Thoughtless remarks impulsively thrown about by parents may result in distorting the child's character and stifling his humane feelings.

I once happened to be in the house of a woman who had a seven year old daughter. Her brother had a daughter of the same age. Both families were on friendly terms; they visited each other and exchanged presents and help. During a conversation which the mother had with her little daughter, she said, referring to her little niece: "I do not want you to be like your conceited, stupid cousin who is the worst student in her calss!"

"Why do you teach these children to hate each other?" I asked the mother, who looked at me with wide opened eyes, quite surprised to hear my question. To her, disparaging people in their absence, though they might be friends or relatives, was normal, common behavior which should not be questioned or condemned.

Contents

Editorial 1

PIONEERS:

Ghada Samman 2
Rose Mary Ghannoum 3

ARTICLES

What is wrong with our
Family Traditions? 3
Traditional Family Relations
in the Arab World 4

REPORTS

Personal Status Laws in
Arab countries 6
Abortion in Tunisia 7
Abortion in Egypt 8
Progressive Family Status in
South Yemen 11

ARTICLES

Family Planning and the
working woman in
Lebanon 9

STUDIES

The Effect of wives'
Employment on the Dynamics
of the Lebanese Family . . 10
The Arab Family in Kuwait. . 12
The Syrian Woman: Her Role
and Status in the Process of
Social Change 13

POEMS

Women of my Country 13
Give us Love. 15

RECENTLY RECEIVED

BY IWSAW 16

RECENTLY PUBLISHED

BY IWSAW 16

Ghada Samman

- The first Arab woman who created a publishing house to publish her own works.
- Her books, which represent a loud claim for liberal thought, are best sellers in the Arab world.

Ghada Samman declares in one of her last works that since 1960 she has taken writing as a career, that she practices writing about ten hours a day, passing most of those hours in reading, exploring and preparing material for her absorbing task.

Born in Syria, educated in Damascus and Beirut universities, she established herself in Lebanon at an early age, hoping to benefit, as many other Arab writers do, from the freedom of the press which has been in this country a confirmed tradition, in spite of the fact that a number of Lebanese journalists and writers have suffered martyrdom and paid with their blood the price of their freedom.

During the war years which destroyed Lebanon, Ghada lost many of her unpublished manuscripts, together with her house, precious documents, souvenirs and valuable paintings. Yet she responded to her loss by saying: "Blessed be the fire which swallowed my house and its contents, if it has been a factor in fighting injustice and selfishness... I shall immediately buy a new package of blank paper and resume my loud call for equality, justice, freedom and joy."

Her writings before 1978 were regularly published in weekly magazines, then collected into books. Within a period not exceeding 20 years she published 16 books and has four more ready for publication. Her works, which consist of fiction, reportages, satire, comments, prose-poems, social and literary criticism, are among the best sellers in the Arab world.

What does she write about?

Her early stories are brief accounts of real or imaginary experiences, where her lively, fantastic style and her interest in tragic, fateful, occult plots, reveal a blossoming but sure talent for fiction. Later stories represent a romantic revolt against pseudo-modernism, puritan attitude toward love, traditional marriage and social hypocrisy. They also present paradoxical situations, eccentric or unusual characters, women in revolt against authoritarian parents or against despotic husbands who treat them as slaves or as sexual objects.

A large part of her writings between 1967 and 1975 uphold the Arab national struggle against Zionism and imperialism, coupled with a vehement attack on common Lebanese or Arab social diseases: apathy and fanaticism, social inequality, unjust treatment of women, political corruption and absence of social consciousness. Most of her social satire is contained in a large book entitled: "Ar-Ragheef Yanbudh Kal-Qalb" (The Loaf Beats like a Heart), written between 1969 and 1975.

Her revolt against enslavement to tradition is illustrated by her book entitled: "Hübb" (Love), where she says in the introduction that she decided to write that book and to use that title after questioning several people on the meaning of love and receiving from them frustrated or absurd answers. Her book tries to enlighten people about the true meaning of love.



Her other non-fiction works contain vivid descriptions of her travels in Lebanon and other Arab countries, in various capitals of Europe, particularly London, Berlin and Rome. Her travels must have contributed to develop her cosmopolitan, open-minded outlook; her detailed reports gave her an opportunity for ample criticism of people and places.

Her style matches her ideas in its rebellious tone. Vivid, factual, rich in allusions and quotations which show her wide reading and her extensive literary culture, it is distinguished by both originality and mobility. Following the author's mood, adapting itself to the literary genre she is handling, it may change from a direct and rational approach to a surrealist trend or a touch on the irrational.

In spite of her loyalty to Arabism, Ghada tries to keep an independent stand, free from political attachments. One of her last books is entitled: "Non-Committed Writings". In another one, carrying the title: "Al-Jassad Haqeebat Safar" (The Body, a Traveling Bag), she attacks the so-called "committed writers" who are involved in paid political propaganda. She mentions Gogol, the Russian writer, who lived 65 years before the Russian Revolution and produced authentic revolutionary works, free from the clichés of contemporary leftist parties which invade Arab countries and other parts of the world.

Probably because of the popularity of her writings, Ghada has been a target for critics who denounced her ultra-liberal ideas, her emotional style and her caustic satire. However, no one can deny that she is an unusually dynamic woman who tried to popularize liberal ideas and succeeded in creating her own publishing house to publish her own works in the Arab countries.

Rose Mary Ghannoun⁽¹⁾

A pioneering rural guide for Lebanese rural women

Rose Mary Ghannoun is probably the first woman in Lebanon to occupy a position allowing her direct contact with rural women for the purpose of encouraging their participation in developing and realizing economic independence.

An AUB graduate (1976) from the Department of Agriculture and Rural Guidance, she participates in a rural reconstruction project created in 1978 by the International Development Agency and sponsored by the "Help the Children Office". The function of the project is to give loans to small Lebanese farmers to help them restore their villages and initiate farming and industrial projects.

Rose Mary holds frequent meetings with rural women; offers them capital in the form of loans, which they pledge to refund after a definite period; guides their choice of investment and encourages them to act independently, avoiding family pressure and social traditions. These women are still too shy to start independent projects or share in important enterprises. Most of them are satisfied with a cow as a form of investment and many keep worrying about what they would do if the cow should die.

Rose Mary has effected wide contact with rural women in and outside Lebanon, discussed their needs and problems in international congresses, talked about mass media that would interest them and induce them to share more effectively in development. The problems of women all over the world are similar. The main ones are :

1. Lack of participation of men in child rearing.
2. Problems of marriage and divorce.
3. Problems of social contact and women's freedom.
4. Sexism in home and school.
5. Lack of appreciation of the rural woman's role.

Besides multiple activities, Rose Mary was able to train five rural pioneers from South Lebanon and the Beqaa, the districts in which she is working, for the task of creating awareness among women regarding the importance of their role in farming. Though the family economy rests on their shoulders, these women are unaware of the value of their role and work. They are the victims of isolation from neighboring villages, and excluded from decisions concerning their own lives and those of their children.

(1) An-Nahar al-Arabi wad-Duali, 31 March — 6 April 1980.

What is wrong with our family traditions?

The following paragraphs, which reveal certain aspects of family life in the Arab World, have been quoted from books dealing with social problems in this part of the world.

"Our Common Family Diseases"⁽¹⁾

"The traditions imposed on the socialization of children in our country serve to corrupt their personality and contribute to the creation of an anti-nationalist generation.

"The child, especially the male child, is brought up with the idea that he is the idol of the family. Everybody is supposed to work for him, to save for him and to tolerate his whims. Instead of creating his own assets, he relies on those of his father and ancestry. Instead of utilizing his personal efforts, he resorts to the intercession of saints and to the mediation of relatives and friends. As soon as he is aware of his environment, he keeps hearing the same melody: "May we attend your wedding!" "May we share the joys of your wedding-day!" "May you soon become a bride-groom!" Such expressions, inherited from tribal days, when the main occupation of the tribe centered around increasing the number of its male fighters, restrict the boy's horizon to a minimum, making him believe that he is the center of the world, and that marriage and procreation are his only *raison d'être*. He thus becomes blindly attached to the family that idolizes him, and enslaved to its traditions. He considers the members of other families as his natural rivals. Instead of cooperating with them, he tries to work against them and to encroach on their rights.

"These prevailing traditional practices are directly opposed to the concept of nationalism which should unify the people of the same country, teach them to transcend the limits of family and tribe, and act according to universal values and humanitarian principles."

"Profiles of Social Characteristics"⁽²⁾

"Among the Bedouin, an individual has little or no identity in his own right. Membership in a household, a clan, and a tribe serve to place him in a meaningful social context. He perceives himself and is perceived by others in these categories."

(1) From "Su'ar min al Hayat" (Images from Life) by Dr. Shaheen Saleeby, Dar ul-Kitab el-Lubnani, Beirut, 1979, pp. 184-185.

(2) From "Saudi Arabian Bedouin" by Saad E. Ibrahim and Donald P. Cole, Cairo Papers in Social Science, vol. 1, monograph 5, p. 11, The American University in Cairo, 1978.

Traditional Family Relations in the Arab World

- In the absence of a national feeling and national unity in a country, the family tends to form a state within a state and to build its own prestige at the expense of that of the legal authority.
- A successful democracy has its basis in a democratic family. People who practice democratic behavior in their own homes are prone to practice it with their fellow citizens.

A study was made in 1957, repeated in 1958, by two American University professors in Beirut, Melikian and Diab, on men and women students representing various religions and nationalities in the Arab World. The questionnaire tried to obtain the students' response regarding the rank they gave to each of their following affiliations: family, religion, citizenship, race and political party.

In both groups, the classification of the above mentioned ties, notwithstanding minor insignificant differences, came as follows: family, race, religion, citizenship, political party.

Another survey made by Dr. Halim Barakat⁽¹⁾ in 1977, embracing various samples of students in the Lebanese, American and Jesuit Universities in Beirut, shows that leftist influence during the last ten years has contributed to the alienation of students from their families. "But," he concluded, "despite the existence of several conditions in Arab society that undermine the family as an agency of political socialization, Arab students in Lebanon were found to be highly integrated into their families."⁽²⁾ "Since the family tends to monopolize socialization in early years, it must be very effective in determining their attitudes, values, etc."⁽³⁾

In the opinion of many observers, the family in the Arab world plays the role of the tribe in pre-Islamic days, especially in rural districts and among isolated communities that live away from the capital and other urban centers.

In bedouin communities such as those that predominated Arab life in pre-Islamic days, the tribal system, based on kinship or blood-ties, created among the Arabs independent units or clans equivalent to mini-states which, in some cases, formed alliances, but, in most cases, fought against each other and used inter-tribal war as a means of conquest and spoliation. Tribal laws bound together the members of the tribe. Loyalty to these laws and mutual help among kinsmen were required in return for protection. In the absence of a central government, each

tribe had to create its own laws and its own means of survival and defence. The law of vengeance, or vendetta, required that blood be avenged by blood; otherwise the family of the culprit should pay a fixed sum of money in return for cessation of hostilities. This law was omnipotent among the Arabs and often led to long inter-tribal wars.

In our days, the same conditions that brought about and consolidated the tribal system in pre-Islamic Arabia, have contributed to the consolidation of family ties in the Arab World. Absence of an effective central authority has favored the persistence of semi-independent districts dominated by feudal lords who derive their power from the support of their families.

Taking Lebanon as an example, the political significance of family solidarity has led many families to form unions headed by their richest or most prominent members. These unions hold regular meetings, impose political views on their members, and, in return, pledge material support to the needy among them, assert their readiness to give them other forms of support by way of employment, promotion, vindictive measures against an enemy, protection from a revenging pursuer. Family unions thus formed become, like religious divisions, one of the most important factors of national disruption.

Besides political disruption, the family, in order to protect its identity and prerogatives, becomes the guardian of entrenched traditions which stand against progress and evolution.

"Since the family is the most important agency of socialization in traditional societies and even post-traditional societies, one would expect that the greater the integration into family life, the greater the resistance to social and political transformation would be. The family in such societies promotes traditional value orientations."⁽³⁾ It tends to preserve the traits of the tribe, which it is supposed to continue. Many families still practice the tribal tradition of endogamous marriage, i.e. marriage between cousins and close relatives, with the aim of consolidating their unity and keeping within the family its property and

(1) Halim Barakat, "Lebanon in Strife", University of Texas Press, Austin and London, 1977

(2) & (3) Barakat, Op. cit. p. 102 & p. 93.

(3) Barakat, Op. cit. p. 80.

land, which is considered a symbol of prestige⁽⁴⁾. Another harmful tradition is the perpetuation of feudal privileges enjoyed by certain families which monopolize political leadership in a certain district exploiting the inhabitants and subjugating them to their own interests.

Among the tribal traits, we may also mention the law of vengeance which still persists as in tribal days; the inheritance of honorary titles and positions, (sheikh, bey, emir), and preference of males because they perpetuate the name of the family, constitute the fighters, protectors and defendants of its rights and privileges. Fathers and mothers are honored by the title or surname which confirms their ownership of a son: abou... (father of...) umm...(mother of...). If they have only female children, they are deprived of this title which stands as a sign of prestige.

As a result of the inferior condition of woman in a traditional family, it is natural to relegate her to the menial tasks, to withhold from her some or all of her share in inheritance. Though women's work at home or in the field is of great value and importance to the whole family, it is taken for granted and fails to be recognized. A woman's position in the family requires her to accept the double standard imposed on her, to tolerate male domination, to practice the feminine virtues of self-sacrifice and chastity because as such she is the guardian of the family honor. "The woman's sexual behavior is equated with her total honor and the man's honor is primarily defined by the sexual conduct of his womanfolk. If a man's honor is besmirched, the stigma of immoral behavior falls on him."⁽⁵⁾

During the last fifty years, the family in many Arab countries has been evolving from extended to nuclear. Children, upon marriage try to form their own families and to be independent from their parents.⁽⁶⁾ Nevertheless, family unions, including parents, children, grandparents, uncles, aunts, ascendant and collateral relatives to the third degree or more, persist as a means of political and social advantages already referred to.

Attachment to the family as a protective power continues to have its grip on individuals in isolated districts, more particularly in periods of social crises. This fact was clear during the Lebanese war (1975-1979), when complete disruction of authority obliged individuals to seek refuge in their families.

The deeper causes of this strong attachment have been analyzed as follows by Mrs. Sania Hamady in her book already quoted:

"In Arab society, the family and not the individual is the social unit. Status within it and in the outer group is defined largely by it. Born into a group, the individual remains a part of it through no special effort to please or belong... The Arab individual and his family never cease to have claims on each other. Even after marriage he remains dependent on his parents and they on him."⁽⁷⁾

Further on the author explains this condition as follows: "Arab society has no structure for an individualistic life. The person who has broken with his family finds no circle and no accommodations apart from it. The collectivist rather than the humanist approach appears in every fact of Islamic thought and institution."⁽⁸⁾

A further elucidation of the problem will show that Arab countries and any other countries which have failed to evolve socially,⁽⁹⁾ have failed to create substitutes for the family: first, in the form of social security and free educational system, capable of liberating the individual from dependence on his family for his schooling expenses and for personal care in disease and old age; second, in the form of social centers and cultural clubs capable of offering friendly relations and moral support to those who have no family life or have been alienated from their families and are seeking social contacts beyond those of the narrow family circle. The fact that citizenship came fourth in the list of priorities obtained from the study made by Diab and Melikian shows the little importance given by the students to a national bond. If questioned about the cause of their indifference, many would answer: "What has our country offered us that helps to develop our loyalty to it?"

The family bond may be a blessing to everyone if it fulfills the individual's need for warm and genuine companionship; if it succeeds in being both a stable and a flexible institution. The first quality presupposes that the family members are joined together by disinterested affection, mutual respect and understanding, and democratic behavior which prevents them from oppressing and exploiting each other. The second means that this institution is ready to keep pace with the times and to adopt innovative ideas which have proved their value to the welfare of the family and that of the country.

The progressive evolution of the family is of great importance to women's status because the old, rigid family structure, as already pointed out, confirms the belief in woman's inferiority and her subjugation to an oppressive double standard.

On the other hand, a reform in the family system requires a reform in the state and vice versa. Democracy, Justice and national unity have to start in the family. Building a democratic state imposes, as a first step, building a democratic family.

From a feminist point of view, we may conclude that, in view of the inferior status imposed on women by the traditional family, it is necessary for feminists to claim and support all laws and measures abolishing sexual discrimination in the family and other civil, economic and penal laws.

From a nationalist point of view we may agree with Halim Barakat when he says that "**confessionalism and familism constitute** the most pervasive, diffuse and enduring loyalties undermining nationalism in Lebanon"⁽¹⁰⁾ and, we may add, in any other country.

(4) Germanos-Ghazaly, Liliane, *Le Paysan, la Terre et la Femme*, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Paris, 1978, ch. IV, pp. 113-171.

(5) Sania Hamady, *Temperament and Character of the Arabs*, Twayne Publishers, N.Y. 1960.

(6) See Al-Raida Nov. 1978, No. 6, p. 8-9

(7) Ibid. p. 87

(8) Ibid. p. 93

(9) See Al-Raida, Vol. II, No. 10, pp. 3-4 & Vol. III, No. 11, pp. 8-9 on "Cultural Values and Population Action Program in Turkey."

(10) Barakat, Op. cit. p. 33.

Personal Status Laws in Arab Countries

Resolutions of the Seminar held in Beirut, May 27-31, 1974

The Status of Women in Arab Laws in the Light of the U.N. International Conventions is the title of a book of over 600 pages, written in both Arabic and English and issued at the Seminar held by the National Council of Lebanese Women, Beirut, 1974.

In an article by Dr. Suhair Qalamawi reviewing the Arab Women's status in family laws, the author says that during the last two decades, there has developed in the Arab World a general awareness of the importance of the personal status laws and of the necessity of revising and modernizing them.⁽¹⁾

Most of the personal status codes in Arab Countries were issued after 1951. It is noted that the principle of slow evolution has been applied with the aim of considering general interest above individual ones. The change in woman's condition and her increased participation in education and public life require a change in laws and regulations imposed on her when her activity was restricted to her household.

According to Suhair Qalamawi's report already mentioned, Jordan issued, in 1951, a complete code of the personal status laws, including those of inheritance and will, followed by a set of laws for non-Muslims.

Tunisia published in 1956 a family code which adopts a revolutionary aspect as compared with those of other Arab countries. This code grants the wife equal rights with the husband regarding divorce. It legalizes adoption, family planning and use of contraceptives.⁽²⁾

In Syria, family laws were revised and promulgated in 1953; in Morocco, in 1957; in Iraq, in 1959; in Democratic Yemen at a recent, unfixed date. In Lebanon, where each of the various religious communities has formulated its own personal status laws, no change has taken place since 1917 except in the inheritance laws, which in 1958 became separate for Muslims and Christians while, before that date, all communities had adopted the Koranic inheritance laws allowing females half of the males' share in inheritance. Family status laws are under preparation in Egypt, Kuwait, Algeria, and Libya.

The Seminar members, representing eleven Arab states, including the Palestinian Lebanese Organization, presented and discussed Arab women's status under three aspects: personal status, labor and politics. They ended their sessions with the following resolutions:

Personal Status

"1. To ask those Arab states which have yet no laws on personal status to promulgate such laws which ensure the principle of equality between the sexes.

2. To amend all legislation discriminatory against women on the basis of international conventions, in particular the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against women adopted by the U.N. General Assembly on November 7, 1967.

3. To establish the minimum age of marriage at eighteen years for women and twenty-one for men.

— Ensure equality in the choice of a husband, annul the right of the father to arrange his daughter's marriage against her will, to prevent her from marrying or to break the marriage contract for lack of qualifications of the husband.

4. Make compulsory the registration of the marriage contract before the authorities.

5. Abolish polygamy.

— In relation to this, recognize as valid the stipulation in the marriage contract which allows a woman to divorce her husband if he contracts a second marriage.

6. Recognize the equality in rights and duties of both husband and wife in a way that conjugal ties be established on a basis of mutual respect between the two parties.

7. That divorce be issued only on the authority of the court, at the request of one or the other party.

— That divorce be granted only for specific limited reasons set down by the law.

— That the spouse against whom the divorce is pronounced be required by the court to pay indemnity.

8. That the interest of the children be given priority in choosing their guardian, without taking their age into account.

9. Given the present social and economic conditions in which the majority of women do not have paid employment, the father is required in all cases to provide for the children in case of divorce.

The recommendations of the Seminar regarding woman and work and woman and politics are in accordance with the decisions of U.N. conventions regarding these two topics.

(1) Ibid. pp. 164-188.

(2) See Al-Raida Aug. 1979, vol. II, No. 9, p. 9.

Abortion in Tunisia⁽¹⁾

"The Tunisian experience in abortion is closely related to the population policy and is an integral part of the Family Planning Program which has been effective for 15 years."⁽²⁾

Within this program, women were given equal civil rights in marriage and divorce in 1956. Polygamy was forbidden, the supply of contraceptives was lawfully allowed in 1961, the legal minimum age at marriage was increased to 20 for men and 17 for women, and in 1966 the National Family Planning Program was launched.

In 1973, the right to free abortion in the first three months of pregnancy was granted to any woman with the only condition being that it be performed by a certified medical doctor. In spite of the ambiguity in the position of Islam in relation to family planning and abortion, the decree of 1973 was met with weak religious resistance. The three surveys made between 1975 and 1976, among three distinct groups of the population, proved that the majority of the Tunisians were still misinformed about the abortion bill and had a strong conviction that abortion is prohibited by Islam. There was a difference, however, between the responses of village women and those of urban women regarding birth control methods. The latter had a positive attitude toward the use of contraceptives and believed that they were permitted by religion. As to abortion, 55 per cent of the respondents believed that the operation was harmful to the mother's health; 81 per cent believed that it was forbidden by religion while 11 per cent believed the contrary. In spite of this negative attitude, the practice shows an increasing number of abortions during the last few years, as proved by the tables provided by surveys made in 1966-74 and 1975-76.

With the launching of the Family Planning Program in 1966, family planning services were extended to 617 centers in the country. The number of women who desired to use birth control increased from 16,176 in 1966 to 86,021 in 1977. Among the four main methods used for this purpose, the IUD and the Pill had the largest number of users; next came abortion and sterilization of the wife. Between 1966 and 1976 the number of abortions increased from 0.67 to 9.78 per cent.

A study made in 1975 on 219 women who had used abortion showed that this method was used in a higher proportion than in developed countries. It also showed that women accepted birth control at a relatively late age. In 1972-73, the average age of those who used abortion was 40 but it dropped to 30 in 1976. The average birth rate dropped from 6.5 children in 1966-70 to 3.97 in 1976. These two results are probably due to the campaign and to the 1973 law. It should be noted however that most of the women who practiced abortion after the 1973 law were married, their ages ranging between 25 and 30, they had more than three living children, were generally illiterate and with a low standard of living.

Fertility Rate Drop Since 1966

From 43.8% in 1966, the average of births-per-thousands dropped to 34.8% in 1977. The fertility average dropped from 193% in 1966 to 157% in 1971 and 141% in 1977 for all women whose ages ranged between 15 and 45. The fertility average of married women dropped from 267.3% in 1966 to 240.0% in 1975.

Though it seems difficult to determine the causes of this change, it should be safe to assume that the improved level of education since the proclamation of independence has had a great impact on the mentality of the new generations. To this we should add the positive effects of the National Family Planning Program and also the raising of the minimum age for marriage.

Conclusions

1. The Tunisian experience of liberalizing abortion since 1973 has shown that government laws, while they do not produce a radical change in the mentality of the people, are a factor in hastening the process of social evolution.
2. The liberalization of abortion is an intrinsic part of the development policy which aims to limit the rate of population increase.
3. The increased practice of abortion will help to reduce the fertility average but this reduction is limited by the fact that the women who practice it have an average age of 30 and the average number of their children is three. This contrasts with abortion conditions in developed countries (Denmark, England, Sweden for example), where about half of the women who practice it have only one child.
4. Statistics differentiate between two groups of women practicing induced abortion:
 - a. Those who are over 30 and practice it for birth control.
 - b. Those below 30 who use it as a part of a family planning program.

This second group meets the objectives of the National Family Planning Program. Yet "an increase in induced abortion could be a result of a failure in the diffusion of the preventive methods. Hence the quality of the practice of contraception through the IUD and the Pill must improve."

(1) From an article by Yolande jemai, published in *Population Studies*, (Dirasat Sukkaniyya), a quarterly periodical issued in Arabic and English by "Population and Family Planning Board", Research Office, Cairo, no. 49 April-June, 1979, pp. 30-49 (Arabic), 16-18 (English).

(2) Ibid.

Abortion in Egypt⁽¹⁾

Attitudes towards abortion have fluctuated all through history, from support and even encouragement to absolute prohibition and condemnation, starting with the Egyptians through the Assyrians, Babylonians, Hindus, Greeks, and Romans to our days.

The present Egyptian law has made no provision for exempting therapeutic abortion from its prohibition and has not distinguished it from abortion performed for other reasons. The law prescribes that he who perpetrates the abortion of a pregnant woman shall be imprisoned. In other articles of the law, if the perpetrator is a doctor he shall receive a life sentence of hard labor. Abortion is viewed in one article as a misdemeanor, and by another as a crime.

Available sources point to the fact that abortion has become one of the most widely used birth control methods in all countries, regardless of their culture, ideology or religion.

Abortion in Egypt

The article dealing with this topic is based on previous studies, and on the findings of the field research undertaken by the Population and Family Planning Board in the area of industrialization and population.

The following facts were highlighted by this article:

1. Forty one % of the sample used in the field study have undergone at least one abortion (spontaneous or induced).
2. Twenty five percent of abortions are induced, to which must be added the unknown percentage of induced abortion reported as spontaneous.
3. The highest percentage of induced, compared to spontaneous abortion, occurs in industrial centres (16%), followed respectively by urban and rural areas.
4. Induced abortion is progressively correlated to the increase in level of income of the individual.
5. Induced abortion is progressively correlated to the increase in the level of urbanism of the wife.

(1) Condensed from an article on this topic, published in Arabic and summarized in English, in *Population Studies*, a quarterly published in both languages by the Supreme Council for Population and Family Planning, Cairo, Egypt, no. 49, April-June 1979. The author of the article is Nadia Halim Suliman, senior expert at the National Social and Criminological Center for Research.

6. Induced abortion is progressively correlated to the number of children, the number of pregnancies and the age of the wife, which all point to the fact that abortion is used as a method of birth control.

Additional Remarks

- a. In spite of the fact that planners and policy makers tend to overlook abortion in their programs, this activity is nevertheless related to the family-planning movement all over the world. This presupposes the possibility of helpful guidance provided by family-planning programs for the purpose of preventing the spread of induced abortion.
- b. The high percentage of illiteracy in Egypt makes it difficult for social planners to provide adequate information and service to the population. Since the responsibility should be carried out by society as a whole, it becomes the duty of individuals to provide the necessary help. We may mention as an example the case of the Shatibi Hospital in Egypt, where the doctors in charge have pledged to perform the abortion operation on a woman who has become pregnant in spite of the IUD practice that they had advised her to use.
- c. It is not right to conclude that contraceptive methods are an adequate substitute for abortion or vice versa. The proper solution is to use the usual birth control methods and, if they fail, to resort to abortion. It is evident that the use of methods that do not produce side-effects is preferable to abortion, which is not always a safe procedure.
- d. In Egyptian society where children are highly prized, parents who practice abortion must be moved by serious factors justifying their practice. In 1971, the IPPF published a report which said that governments that forbid abortion create a problem for women who use it without the possibility of obtaining medical care. In this case the report recommended private associations to help these women.

In conclusion, it is the duty of the Egyptian government to handle the problem of abortion in a realistic way and reconsider the law which forbids its practice. This law, according to Egyptian gynecologists, has only contributed to extend the practice of abortion and create problems that must not be overlooked.

Maternal deaths in Bangladesh⁽¹⁾

An article published on Dec. 13th 1976 in the *Bangladesh Times* by Mrs. Shahida Hassan contains an ardent plea for the abolition of an antiquated 1860 law making abortion illegal. "This law," she said, "has shielded private doctors rather than the cause of humanity or women."

A registered doctor can earn up to \$1,700 a month from giving abortions to women who can afford it. The law overlooks such practice, but a poor village woman, certain to be turned away at one of the few government hospitals if she wants a pregnancy terminated, submits to a dangerous form of abortion. She resorts to a village midwife who often causes severe internal injuries. In 1975, statistics

reported the death of 10% of women suffering from such injuries.

As long as distribution of contraceptives is irregular, women will continue to perform abortions, with or without government authorization. It would help much, especially from the economic point of view, if abortion was legalized. "Each hospital salvage operation for a patient injured by a village midwife costs \$100 per month in food and antibiotics. Bangladesh, of course, is desperately short of hospital beds, doctors and nurses."

(1) *International Women's News*, Vol 75, no. 2, June 1980, p. 28.

Family Planning and the Working Woman in Lebanon ⁽¹⁾

In 1966, the United Nations proclaimed the right of couples to plan the number of their children. In 1968, the International Conference on Human Rights, held in Teheran, confirmed the basic right of married people to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their offspring. Their right to receive adequate information regarding family planning was equally recognized. Again in 1974, at the International Congress of Bucharest, the same rights were endorsed by United Nations agreement.

Lebanon was one of the signatories of the above agreements. Yet, in spite of this fact, the Lebanese government has not performed any positive steps toward the application of the U.N. decisions regarding family planning. In the Lebanese penal code, two articles condemn all activities tending to encourage the use of contraceptives. First, Article 537 states that any one who prescribes or publicizes the use of contraceptives will be liable to a penalty of one month to one year imprisonment, besides the payment of an indemnity of 25 to 100 Lebanese pounds. Second, Article 538 decrees the same penalty for anyone who sells or offers for sale any contraceptive articles.

These two articles contradict the Human Rights Charter and show a clear discrepancy in governmental attitude. Efforts have been made by socially active groups and individuals to bring about a change in the above laws, but they have been to no avail.

Another obstacle to family planning in Lebanon is the small number of women, at the child bearing age, who have access to birth control information. If the population of Lebanon is estimated at 3 million, the number of women at the fertile age should be around 675,000. If we estimate at a quarter of this number, i.e. around 170,000, the number of women who really desire their pregnancies, we may consider the remaining 500,000 as subject to having unwanted pregnancies. A restricted number of these women, mainly from the rich and educated class, are within reach of contraceptive methods, while the majority of rural women and those of the poor urban class remain totally ignorant of any information about these methods.

The Family Planning Association in Lebanon was created for the purpose of contributing, as far as possible, to the handling of a problem which is beyond the capacity of governments in developing countries, where people suffer from a shortage of physicians and adequate health centers. The activities of this Association have been mainly directed to the most needy areas of the country: the relatively unprivileged rural villages of South Lebanon. A recent survey made by the Association showed that 75% of the women interviewed were willing to use contraceptives. Seventy% asked to have adequate information on this topic. Only 30% had already received some information about it and most of them declared that they had an unwanted number of children.

Family-planning and fertility control are often in positive correlation with the level of education of the parents but more directly with that of the mother. Education usually leads a woman to postpone the time of her marriage, to seek work outside the home and to acquire further knowledge about her problems and those of her environment including those of birth control and family-planning. This fact is more evident in urban districts where women have easier access to education and work and, therefore, have real interest in limiting the number of their children.

In rural districts, though women have to put up with a double burden on account of their work at home and in the field, they are still enslaved to the tribal tradition that a large number of children gives social prestige and ensures security in old age. To change people's mentality, a deeper study of the problem is necessary. One of the factors of change should be the instauration of economic and social reforms which would make parents less dependent on children in case of disease and old age. Another factor is to show them the advantages of a small family as being more economical, and safer for the health of mother and children.

Egyptian Women in Parliament ⁽¹⁾

"Egyptian women are now guaranteed a quota of 30 seats in parliament. Amendments to the law on Personal Status have not only improved women's rights in divorce but have also provided reforms in the spheres of work and politics.

Married women now have the right to enter the labor force without consent from their husbands. In the past, a woman who worked against her husband's wishes was placed legally in the category of "nashaz", or disobedient, thereby losing the right to maintenance and jeopardizing her ability to obtain a court divorce.

The amendments to the Law on Personal Status were submitted to the National Assembly in a decree from President Sadat and passed by a vote of 380 to 12, after having won the support of many religious leaders, including the Head of Al-Azhar Mosque, the Grand Mufti and the Minister of Waqf.

(1) Condensed from an article (in Arabic) on this topic by Dr. Adnan Mroweh, president of the Family Planning Association in Lebanon.

(1) International Women's News. Vo. 75, no. 2, June 1980, p. 31.

The Effect of Wives' Employment on the Dynamics of the Lebanese Family ⁽¹⁾

In Lebanon, as in other developing countries, the female activity rate is increasing. The participation of women in economic production has been reported to be 17% of the total labor force. (ECWA, 1978). Although this rate is small compared to western nations, it is probably the highest in the Arab World.

Women's employment outside the home is a new phenomenon that presupposes changes in the traditional cultural patterns which confine women to the home, define their role as being mothers and homemakers and their main functions in society as being childbearing and housework. This strict segregation of roles carries with it specific definitions of tasks, the nature of which affects the entire life style of the family. (Hilal, 1971; Keddie, 1978; Antoun, 1968).

In Lebanon, there are very few studies on the impact of women's employment on family dynamics.

This lack of data has stimulated the authors, who are college students taking a course on Arab women, to investigate this problem, and test the following hypotheses:

1. Employment of wives affects the traditional division of household tasks.
2. Employment of wives affects the traditional authority structure of the family.
3. Employment of wives affects the traditional value system with respect to attitudes towards the role of women.

Methodology

The data collected on family dynamics was restricted to three areas, namely, household division of tasks; decision making in the family; and attitudes towards sex-roles. Data were gathered by means of a questionnaire, administered to married women in an interview situation. The questionnaire consisted of four parts: first, background information; second, questions on division of household tasks; third, decision making; and fourth, a five point scale to measure attitudes towards sex-roles. The sample was purposively selected from three cities, Beirut, Jbeil, and Baalbeck. A total of fifty three married women were studied, of which twenty-eight were working and twenty-five were not. The two groups were matched in age and education. The respondents were selected to be all under thirty years of age and having at least a secondary school education, that is a Baccalaureat part II.

Results

The majority of the sample (62%) was aged between 25 and 30 years, and reported to have been married for more than five years (59%). Working women had a better education than those not working; sixty-four% of the former had a university degree compared to 32% of the latter. Similarly, husbands of working women were better educated than husbands of those not working, where 75% and 60% respectively had completed university education. There were twice as many working women with no children

than non-working, and data revealed that there was an association between number of children and occupation of mothers. That is, working mothers had in general less children than non-working.

The majority of working wives (57%) occupied administrative and clerical positions: 25% of them were professionals, that is teachers, university professors, nurses and lawyers: 7% had managerial positions in the public sector; and 7% were helping in the family business. Only one (3%) was found to be self-employed. On the other hand, their husbands' occupations were found to be higher in status than theirs. Thirty-two% of them were professionals, 32% had managerial positions, 25% were employees and 10% were self-employed. When the occupational status distribution of husbands of working women was compared to that of husbands of non-working, the data revealed that the latter had a higher occupational status. Forty% were professionals, 24% had managerial positions, 12% were self-employed and 8% were in family business. Only 16% were found to be employees.

When women were asked about their work history, 35% reported that they had never worked outside the home, and 32% reported to have worked before and after marriage.

However, the majority of working women (61%) when they were asked to give reasons for working, gave a traditional response: "for financial reasons", while the rest said for "self-fulfilment" (29%), "out of boredom" (7%), and for "economic independence" (3%).

In order to investigate the effect of women's work on the authority structure of the family the data were cross-tabulated in a comparative table. The results indicate that in general, the percentage of husbands making decisions alone was consistently higher for non-working than for working women. The only exceptions were in decisions concerning buying and selling property and social visits, where a larger number of husbands of working wives were reported to take the decisions alone. On the other hand, there were proportionally more working wives than non-working who admitted making decisions on their own. There were almost twice as many deciding on buying and selling property, budgeting household expenditures, shopping for food and expensive items, children's discipline and social visits. However, they showed similar patterns of response in choice of children's schools, vacation and travel. The only situations where non-working women had more initiative were shopping decisions for clothes, outings and recreation. The equalitarian nature of the authority structure in terms of decision making is evidenced by the results. For this specific group of women, whether employed or not, a large portion of couples decide together on most matters, except for food shopping, which seems to be a prerogative of the wife.

However, it should be noted here that in general there are more working women reporting equalitarian attitudes than the non-working. The category "others", refers to a variety of responses, such as in-laws, brothers, sisters, other relatives or servants, especially in the case of buying food.

Division of household tasks was cross-tabulated in order to compare the performance of tasks by the different members of the family. The results indicate that washing,

(1) By Hanan Haidar, Suzan Nehmé, Doris Tchatalbochian, and Abibi Tubobanini. Women's Studies Course, B.U.C.

cleaning, cooking, feeding babies, and ironing are performed mostly by mothers in the case of non-working women and somewhat shared in the case of working wives. However, it is only in the case of employed women that both spouses share in performing these household tasks and this in less than 25% of the cases. On the other hand, only three non-working women reported that their husbands helped in child care. Data also revealed that traditional sex-segregation of tasks in terms of location of activity was striking in both groups, but more significantly so in the case of non-working women. Tasks requiring technical skills or contacts outside the house premises were mostly performed by men. The majority of answers given by non-working women show that husbands take care of daily shopping, paying bills, taking children and other family members to physicians, and repairing. The same trend is noticeable for working women but occurs less frequently.

In order to find out whether the actual behavior of family members in terms of authority structure and division of household tasks is based on a change in the value orientation of these women, answers of the two groups of women on a five point sex-role orientation scale were tabulated. It is evident from the data that working women are less traditionally oriented than the non-working women. The only instances where similarities appear and both groups take a rather traditional stand, show in situations that involve a deterioration of relations with husband and children. On the other hand, the items which received the least traditional answers from the working women were related to sexual discrimination in employment, double standards, premarital sexual behavior and division of household tasks.

Conclusion

The general hypotheses advanced in this study, that employment of wives affects family dynamics in terms of authority structure, division of household tasks, and attitudes towards sex-roles has been substantiated.

In line with other findings from industrialized societies (Pietrowski, 1971; Michel, 1971) the results of this study indicate that Lebanese working women share more in decision making than the non-working, and the operative authority structure in their families tends to be equalitarian. However, data indicated that for a substantial group of non-working wives decision making was shared among the spouses. This finding is not paradoxical, and does not weaken the argument that wives' employment affects the authority structure of the family. On the contrary, it gives evidence to the fact that women's participation in the labor force strengthens the existing equalitarian trend. On the other hand, the data on division of household tasks supported the hypothesis that women's employment outside the home gave them more opportunities to be helped by their husbands in housework. These results agree generally with previous findings (Michel, 1971). However, we should note here that if husbands do more "feminine" tasks, the wives also start to share more in the performance of "masculine" tasks. (Blood & Wolf, 1960). As for the influence of employment on the sex-role ideology of women, the data have given evidence to the existence of an association between working women and a change in their attitudes towards traditional sex-role orientation; a finding that is in line with previous research. (Pietrowski, 1971).

Progressive Family Status Laws in South Yemen

The new "Family Law No. 1", promulgated by the government of the Arab Peoples' Democratic Republic of Yemen in 1974, represents a progressive step toward the liberation of Yemeni women as compared with former family laws based on commercial benefits and feudal privileges.

1. The new family law requires the parents or guardians to obtain the agreement of the betrothed before concluding any marriage.

2. Presents exchanged during the period of engagement should be considered as symbolic gifts, not exceeding a certain cost, and should not be returned upon breaking up the engagement.

3. This law fixes the minimum age for the bride at 16, that of the bridegroom at 18; the maximum age differential between the spouses should not exceed 20, unless the woman is over 35.

4. No second marriage may be contracted by a man except through an authorized court, provided it

has been justified by one of the following reasons:

1) medically confirmed barrenness of the wife
2) medically confirmed chronic and incurable disease of the wife.

5. The spouses carry out an equal share of responsibility in maintenance and care of the family.

6. The Mahr (dowry paid by the bridegroom) whether paid in advance or at a postponed date, should not exceed 100 dinars.

7. The adult son or daughter should be responsible for maintenance and care of disabled parents.

8. Divorce should never be unilateral.

9. No divorce may occur except by court decision; no court is allowed to legitimate a divorce unless all attempts have been made to bring about a reconciliation of the couple in question.

The inheritance law, however, has not been included in "Family Law No. 1", whose most important items have been here related.

Woman's Image in the Lebanese Press 1935-1975

Woman's image in Lebanese textbooks, in Egyptian mass media and in the Egyptian cinema has been treated in brief reports published in former issues of *Al-Raida*⁽¹⁾. Woman's image in the Lebanese press has been contributed through the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World in a detailed study project recently made by Mr. Richard Allouche, assistant professor at Lyon University II (France), on the image of woman in the Lebanese press between 1935 and 1975.

The image as defined by the author of the study is the sum of functions, real or theoretical, attributed to woman by society and thus projected through the press. The place occupied by woman in the press means, according to him, the area occupied by her in the sample of study used by the researcher.

In presenting his work, the author shows some reserve regarding the conclusions. There are certain principles, he says, that should serve as a guideline for both researcher and reader and which are not easy to detect by either of them. First is the differentiation between woman's function as a free individual struggling for her independence, and that of a mere follower who speaks in another's name and blindly applauds his or her liberal or feminist ideas. Another principle is that of differentiating between an independent feminist movement springing out of local awareness and an artificial activity spurred by foreign publicity, or by a desire to shine or to imitate the West.

Woman's Place in Daily Papers

In studying six daily papers that appeared between 1935 and 1975 the author has found a positive correlation between the sample of study and that of the area allotted to women, which means that an increase in the volume of samples studied corresponds with an increase in the said area. But the increase does not necessarily indicate a corresponding growth in woman's standing. It could be merely dictated by the necessity of filling a vacuum.

Between 1945 and 1965, the number of Lebanese daily papers doubled as a result of the economic prosperity which Lebanon enjoyed at the time. As a result of political and economic changes, the woman's section reached twelve times its size in 1935. In the so-called "moderate" papers woman's image concentrated on social events. In the rightist "bourgeois" papers, a romantic attitude toward woman restricted her role to love, maternity and voluntary social work. In other conservative papers her role was insignificant while in leftist papers, leftist ideology emphasized her political and social activities.

In Weekly Magazines

The study limits its extent to three: *As-Sayyad*, *Al-Usubu'-al-Arabi* and *La Revue du Liban* 1965-1975.

The first periodical devotes to women a quarter of its printed space but 70% of this space is occupied by pictures. In 1965, 76% of the area reserved for publicity is occupied by women. The main articles on women in this magazine discuss her activities as social worker, writer, artist, singer, university student. They contain news items of social parties, fashions, cosmetics, etc. The traditional functions of woman and her feminine characteristics are emphasized. The proclamation of the year 1975 as the Woman's Year did not create any positive reaction in the woman's section of this magazine.

Al-Usubu'-al Arabi 1965 gives women 36% of its printed space. Its outstanding feminine page is the weekly article written by Ghada al-Samman, a Syro-Lebanese writer who expresses an acerbic revolt against traditional attitudes toward women. Her articles relate and vehemently attack certain current events which bear witness to the degradation of women and confirm their slavish behavior. In one of these articles Ghada attacks the African ruler Mobutu, whose picture in a certain magazine represented him sitting on a chair while two women servants diligently polished his shoes. In another she violently criticizes Fidel Castro who proposed the exchange of 20 women prisoners in his country for one Cuban male prisoner in the United States. A third article protests against a religious leader who authorized the "beating of woman under given circumstances."

Ghada's articles and other items dealing with civil marriage and problems of the woman artist show a progressive step achieved by *Al-Usubu' al-Arabi* over *As-Sayyad* in 1965. This Progressive step was not followed up in 1975. Ghada al-Samman's articles take on an obscure, surrealistic style. The International Woman's Year stimulated a few people to declare their doubts concerning the efficiency of its recommendations. A study published in this magazine by Afif Farraj, critic and researcher, attracted Mr. Allouche's attention for its new approach. It draws a parallel between two opposite philosophic trends in Arab history: 1) the rationalist, led by Ibn Rushd (Averroes) and adopted by modern thinkers like Taha Hussain, supports women's liberation; 2) the mystic, represented by Al-Ghazali of the 10th century A.D. and taken up by Al-Accad and Ali Wafi and others of the present age, considers woman as an inferior creature, incapable of standing on the same footing as man.

Richard Allouche approves the philosophic approach used by A. Farraj who links woman's liberation with that of society as a whole. But he prefers a more up-to-date reference like Annie Leclerc, a woman writer who argues in one of her books that "all our culture has been produced by men who imposed on woman their own points of view and obliged them to serve their own interests." She adds that "one-sided opinions must be revised, and women be given the opportunity to express themselves."

An article written in 1975 by Walid Shmait, and published in *Al-Usubu' Al-Arabi*, criticizes film producers for restricting their films to the theme of love ever since the creation of the cinema industry. "Woman has been

(1) See *Al-Raida*, June 1978, No. 4, p.4; Nov. 1978, No.6, p.17; May 1979, Vol. II, No.8, p.11; Nov. 1979, vol. II, No. 10, p. 4.

represented as a sex object, her personal and family problems have been neglected, while the question of guarding her honor seems to be her main preoccupation."

Women as an instrument of publicity receive great emphasis in the 1975 issues. They occupy 85% of the advertising illustrations and 57% of the whole advertising material in the magazine.

La Revue du Liban, another weekly published in French in 108-124 large size pages, gives almost the same space to illustrations as that allotted to texts. Woman as a topic occupies 17.45% of the whole amount of texts and 82.55% of all the illustrations.

Among the serious articles published by this magazine, one written by Louis Armand (of the French Academy) asserts that women are qualified to play in the future an important role on the social, emotional and physiological levels. Socially, the author of the article says, women must participate in the elaboration of systems and laws whose formulation has been monopolized by men. From the emotional and humanitarian point of view, woman's potential in this respect can modify the rigid, technocratic image imposed by men on our present age. From the physiological point of view, electrochemical studies of the brain have shown the existence of a close interaction between the physiological and the psychological phenomena. Women's physiological make-up tends to produce psychological traits which complete those of men. Woman's natural interest in child-bearing and child care forms a parallel or a counterpart to man's natural bent toward adventure and risky exploits.

Mr. Allouche criticizes this article on the ground that the desire of the author to modify the present systems in favor of woman, is contradicted by his covert statement that each sex has a different nature which justifies considering woman as a complement, not an equal, to man.

As a conclusion about the weekly magazines, the author of the study sees the impossibility of drawing final conclusions based on common denominators and parallel treatment of topics. This is due to the absence of planned programs and of field questionnaires preparing the ground for further study and discussion of woman's status and problems. Articles are mainly inspired by daily events or by the particular experiences of their authors.

Woman in Feminine Periodicals

According to Mr. Allouche, no outstanding differences exist between the contents of feminine magazines and those of the general ones regarding woman's status as a whole.

In 1952, when Lebanese women obtained political rights, the question was discussed by several papers and magazines including **Sawt-el-Mara'a**, a feminine monthly founded in 1945. The editor, Edvick Shayboub, showed the validity of women's political claim in an article published in this magazine in 1952. By way of contrast, the author of the study published an article written in 1911 and published by a feminine magazine of that period, **Al-Hasna'**, in which the author, Bishop Boulos Abu Adal, attacks the campaign launched by Western suffragettes claiming the right to vote. Using a religious argument, the bishop says that God created woman for a certain function out of which she should not deviate.

Two years later, 1954, Rose Ghurayyib wrote an article in the same magazine, condemning the acceptance of

ready-made theories and ideas regarding woman. In preparation for the Unesco Conference on Women held in Lebanon in the same year, she recommended the scientific study of woman's condition and needs instead of using rhetorical speeches and ostentatious recommendations which would remain dead material.

To this Mr. Allouche replies by approving the idea of resorting to scientific research in treating woman's problems, since the himself has adopted this type of work as a career. Yet he makes certain reserves concerning scientific theories which should not always be taken as mere facts, because even scientific judgments are apt to change and become obsolete.

Final conclusions

Weekly magazines, though they give woman more space than daily papers, still restrict her sphere to feminine activities and keep her away from man's world, i.e., from the areas of leadership and major decisions.

Articles handling woman's participation in politics vary between sheer condemnation and reserve based on woman's particular nature, which differentiates her functions from those of man. Taking this as an argument, supporters of sexual discrimination overemphasize the biological function of women and their emotional nature. This "natural difference" is the arm they use to legitimize for men polygamy and other privileges, while women are called upon to vow eternal faithfulness to their husbands and to consider love and devotion to them as a duty, even though no real feeling may exist between the two.

The study made by Mr. Allouche is limited in both time and space. It presents the ideology of the so-called conservative classes in Lebanon between 1965 and 1975, versus that of a few liberal writers such as Ghada al-Samman, concerning woman's status and claims.

Woman's cause continues to be a subject of debate all over the world and remains in great need of further study and elucidation. The image of woman as presented in this study of the Lebanese press at a certain period carries a reiterated call to the education and emancipation of woman but within certain traditional limits.

As to the attitude of the researcher regarding the "natural difference" between the sexes, taken as an evidence for sexual discrimination, it does not fall within the scope of his research.

GIVE US LOVE

This poem, written on New Year's Day, 1958, by Fadwa Tuqan, the Palestinian poet, sounds like a universal prayer.

*Give us love: through love will the treasures of good
Burst out in our souls,
Our songs will blossom and flower,
Will shower gifts, blessings and power,
Give us love that will rebuild our crumbling world
And restore fertility to our sterile earth.
Give us wings by which we conquer ascending horizons,
Wings to free us from abysmal caves
And shatter our prison chains.
Give us light that will cut through the deep dark waves,
Its flooding brightness carrying us to extreme heights
Where we may reap victory and taste pure delights*

Fadwa Tuqan
(Trans. from Arabic)

The Arab Family in Kuwait: Size and Structure ⁽¹⁾

Recent studies dealing with family status in the Arab world are few and sometimes contradictory. While some researchers, such as Dr. Madeeha Naser (1972), assume that 75% of Iraqi families belong to the extended type grouping three generations living under one roof⁽²⁾, Dr. Sana Khawli's investigation, condensed in *Al-Raida* (no. 9, vol. II, p. 15), leads her to conclude that the Arab family is evolving into a non-isolated nuclear family.

Some researchers adopt a middle course by recognizing the existence of differences between country and town regarding family type and affirming that the extended family exists in a larger proportion in the country than in town and city. Good, another sociologist, asserts that for economic and other reasons, the extended family has not been the rule in Arab countries. Peterson says that demographic factors have prevented the extensive spread of the extended family in Egypt and that the large family of six members or more formed 40% of Egyptian families since the beginning of the twentieth century.

A study prepared by Dr. Fahd al-Thaqeb aims to show that even if economic and demographic conditions should favor the spread of the extended family, as is the case in Kuwait, this family type is bound to remain a minority.

This study is based on statistics derived from interviews between 1965 and 1970 with a random sample of Kuwaiti families representing various social levels.

Family Size

Between 1965 and 1970, the majority of families in Kuwait were made up of six or more members per family. This proportion decreased among university graduates from 67.4% in 1965 to 56.9% in 1970. The data reveal that the number of family members tends to decrease in proportion with the cultural, economic and social status of the family. For example, while 33% of family heads with secondary education have limited the number of their families to five or less, only 12% of illiterate family heads have adhered to this number.

Large-sized families are characteristic of higher middle and lower middle classes. Small-sized families of 1-5 members exist at the rate of 38% in less privileged classes, while 72% of the lower middle class are made up of eight or more each.

Family Structure

Three family types have been singled out: the nuclear, the quasi-extended and the extended family. The first

comprises the parents and children; the third includes two or more families living in the same house, joined by blood ties. The quasi-extended family is a small sized extended family.

In Kuwait, the nuclear family forms 59.2%, the quasi-extended 18.4%, and the extended family 22.4%.

The size of the family is not a sound indicator of its type, though it may have some connection with it. It was found that only 26% of the nuclear families interviewed were made up of six members each, while 70% of them had 6-12 members per unit.

The study has shown that the nuclear family, while it is not the ideal type, is most common among urban, educated, young people and among the middle class. This type is less common in lower and lower middle class. About 31% of families of the lower class are quasi-extended while in the upper socio-economic group, the quasi-extended type reaches only 15%.

The proportion of the extended family type is higher among illiterate groups: 30% for illiterate against 17% for university people.

Age of Respondents

The family type differed according to the age of people interviewed. Around 50% of the young lived in nuclear families. Many of them lived in quasi-nuclear ones and did not break communication with their relatives. The ages of 65% of nuclear family people ranged between 30 and 39 years, while the highest proportion of the extended family type existed among those who were 50 years of age or above.

Conclusion

The majority of families forming the random sample of this survey belonged to the nuclear family type. The extended family, though it should be favored by social and demographic conditions in a country like Kuwait, is likely to form a minority.

The data show a steady increase in the average number of family members during the last few years. In 1957 the average was 6.8 per family; in 1965 it rose to 7.3; and in 1970, to 7.6. The rise is due to improved economic and demographic conditions in Kuwait. Also, the proportion of families numbering 6 or more each, rose from 66.4% in 1965 to 70.2% in 1970.

The family size is also an indicator of the fertility rate and bears no relation to family structure. It is noteworthy that extended families joining together three generations formed only 17% of the bulk of extended families. This result coincides with Good's theory that traditional, extended families have been and remain a minority in the Arab world.

(1) Condensed from Dr. Fahd Al-Thaqeb, "Size and Structure of the Arab and Kuwaiti Family," *Journal of Social Sciences*, No 12, Year IV, July 1976 (Arabic), pp. 81-91.

(2) *Ibid.* p. 81.

The Syrian Woman: Her Role and Status in the Process of Social Change(1)

A study of 136 stencilled Arabic pages, prepared by the author for the "Section of Social Research" in the Syrian ministry. It consists of six chapters dealing (1) with the demographic structure of women in Syria, (2) their distribution between urban and rural districts, (3) women as a working force (4) woman's education as a factor of her social and economic liberation, (5) woman's work in relation to economic and social development in Syria, (6) final conclusions.

The study shows that the demographic pyramid in Syria presents a large base of youthful groups aged below 14 years. Females belonging in this category include about half of the entire number of females in the country. This situation cannot but create some discomfort to the Syrian economy because it means that half of the female population is made up of minors who have to depend for their living on their families or some other providers.

Around 1975 the proportion of females in rural districts was higher than that in urban ones. This is explained by the large number of males emigrating to towns during this period.

At the same time, a decrease in infant mortality, due to improved health conditions, has increased the number of dependent youth from both sexes.

The above factors have served to increase the number of working women, especially in rural districts. As a result, special efforts are required for the training of these women toward a more effective participation in development, particularly because it was found out in 1970 that 88% of them were illiterate.

In 1977, the participation of women in the total labor force did not exceed 9% of the whole female population. This low percentage is explained by the high rate of illiteracy, especially among rural women.

The distribution of the female working force in 1970 came in the following order: (1) rural women, (2) employees in social and public services, (3) in commerce, electricity and hydraulics, (4) in finance and insurance projects, (5) in transport, storage and communication, (6) finally, in mines and quarries.

Women who, according to the study, do not form a part of the labor force, are mainly housekeepers who count 13% of the whole; women students: 11%; retired women, pensioned and disabled women: 5%.

Women participating in rural activities form 10% of the female rural population. In 1976 the rate of female work in industrial projects exceeded by 11% its amount in 1970, which means a certain progress in rural industrialization.

Increased female participation in rural work, due to male emigration to cities has resulted in an increased number of women working for their families without remuneration. This practice forms a part of the social system prevailing in rural communities of the Arab East.

Another detail presented by the study is the consequent proportion of literacy to lower age group i.e., the lower the age of women the lower the illiteracy rate. In 1976, the proportion of female illiteracy was 15% lower than in 1970. Illiteracy is highest among rural working women: 62% in 1976. Those working in industry form 12% of the whole body of working women, 2% of whom are literate and the rest illiterate. Those working in the services sector make up 15% of the whole, 4% of whom are illiterate, 5% holding elementary, intermediate or secondary certificates; 4% trained workers, 2% with higher education. Most of those who work for their families without any credit belong to the illiterate group.

Woman's work is now an integral part of the Syrian economy. As such, it is strictly interrelated with the conditions of economic and social progress in the country. Her fuller participation in development depends on the removal of obstacles which stand in her way as well as on the modification of laws and traditions which encroach on her work rights. In this perspective, woman's work as housekeeper and field worker should be acknowledged and remunerated.

On the other hand, an adequate number of nurseries and kindergartens for the children of working mothers are a necessity, not only because they relieve mothers from worry but also because they ensure the new generation a balanced and progressive form of education.

Planners of social and economic change in Syria are called to take into serious consideration the problems of the working woman and make use of all the possibilities of increasing her contribution and allowing her fairer profits.

Women of My Country

by Nadia Tuéni

*Women of my country,
The same light hardens your bodies,
The same shade relaxes them,
Sweetly elegiac in your metamorphoses,
The same suffering chips your lips
And your eyes are adorned by the same jeweler.*

*You,
Who reassure the mountain,
Who make man believe he is a man,
Who make ash believe it is fertile,
Who make the landscape believe it is unchangeable,
Women of my country,
You who in chaos refind the durable.*

Translated from French
Collection: "Liban, 20 poèmes pour
un amour", Beirut, 1980.

(1) by Dr. M. S. Akhras, 1979. See Al-Raida, vol. III, Feb. 1980, No. 11, p. 10 "Family Status in Syria", by the same author.

Thaláth Maárik Fikriyyah (Three Battles for Liberalism)⁽¹⁾

Written and published in 1976 by Dr. Mukhtar at-Tehami, this book presents in 185 pages three champions of liberal thought who appeared in Egypt during the nineteenth century. The first is Qassem Ameen (d. 1908) who published in 1899 a remarkable study of the status of the Egyptian woman in his time: "Tahrir el-Maraa" (The Emancipation of Woman), in which he drew his arguments for woman's liberation from Koranic as well as from judicial, economic and psychological sources. The second, Ali Abdul Rázeq, stated in his book "Al-Islám wa Usúl-ul-Hukm" (Islam and the Principles of Government) (1925), that Muslim law is a purely religious law and should not be applied to the form of government adopted by muslims. The Caliphate or theocratic rule was not instituted by the Prophet and its abolition has been a logical

outcome of historical evolution. Taha Hussein, the third of the three, declared in his book on Pre-Islamic Poetry: "Ash-Shir al-Jahili", published in 1926, that he had used the Descartes method of research to prove that "most of so-called Pre-Islamic poetry is a subject of doubt because political dissensions, religious conflicts and anti-Arab movements in early Islam contributed to the forging of the larger part of it." According to him, though Abraham and Ismail have been mentioned in both the Bible and the Koran, that does not make a sufficient proof that they historically existed.

These three books produced great commotion and aroused a good deal of antagonism at the time of their publication. Their impact contributed to the awakening of the Arab mind and, until now, they stand as

monuments of free thought and starting-points for the forward march of rationalism in the Arab world.

(1) by Dr. Mukhtar at-Tehami, Baghdad, 1976

NEW BOOKS FOR ARAB CHILDREN

"The Center for Arab Unity Studies"⁽¹⁾ in Beirut has recently published a series of Arabic books for young people. The first set, "Rubu Biladi", consists of eight booklets containing illustrated information about eight Arab cities, describing the outstanding features of each, the main occupations of its inhabitants and the chief products of the country it represents. It also points out the factors of progress and modernism recently introduced. The other set, "Fata-1-Arab", contains a series of historical and modern stories dealing with Arab unity and nationalism. Women's role in both sets is emphasized.

(1) "Marqaz Dirasat-el-Wehda-1-Arabiyya"

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY IWSAW

CONTEMPORARY ARAB WOMEN POETS

by Rose Ghurayyib⁽¹⁾

The title of this Arabic work is "Nasamat wa A'aseer fish-Shi'ir in-Nisa'i l-Mu'asir", which may be translated into: "Breezes and Whirlwinds in contemporary Arab Women's Poetry". It tries to suggest a panoramic view of varied, or contrasting ideas and emotions in the feminine poetic production which the book presents.

The number of contemporary women poets in the Arab World, who appeared between 1950 and 1978, is about fifty. The book deals with the most outstanding among them, mainly those whose works were accessible to the author, about thirty in number. Three of them: Fadwa Tuqan, Nazik al-Malaika, Andree Chedid, were studied with particular detail as

representatives of more personal trends of thought and style and relatively more prolific and mature outputs. The book also contains prefaces introducing the back-grounds of the feminine poetry of to-day in ancient Arabic literature, in the literature of the 19th century and of the early twentieth. The relatively large number of contemporary Arab women poets evidently shows a mounting interest in the writing of poetry, not only in Arabic but also in French and English. The book bears witness to the freedom with which these women express their intimate thoughts, their longings and their frustrations, their happy or sad memories, their convictions and their revolts, an attitude equally reflected in their breaking up with traditional poetic forms and their indulgence in using free verse and prose-poetry.

The objective treatment of this intricate topic by the author gives this work a particular value.

THE STATUS OF THE ARAB WOMAN

A Select Bibliography
(Mansell House, London)

An excellent tool for researchers in the field, but helpful as well to women's organizations, universities, conference preparation, governments — in short, anyone who has need for information on the position of woman in the Arab world.

The material was compiled by Samira Rafidi Meghdessian, who has been head librarian at Beirut University College. She was consultant for a survey of National information systems in twelve Arab countries, conducted by United Nations in 1976.

Entries are in English and French. They are arranged under six general subjects, and nineteen Arab countries.

(1) 430 p.p. published by Al-Muassasa-l-Arabiyya li-d-Dirasat wan-Nashr, Beirut, Lebanon, 1980.

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