

Women's Participation in Development

It is now government policy in many 3rd world countries to mobilize women to help implement development plans. This policy has met a favorable reaction from the majority of respondents, although a few groups, responding specifically to the issue of housewives working outside the home, have reacted negatively⁽¹⁾. There is no doubt that the efforts spent by the U.N.O. toward the affirmation of the Rights of Man, including sexual equality, have been largely responsible for the promotion of this policy.

Not only does woman's participation play a necessary role in the economic development of 3rd world countries, it also plays a role in the solution of their demographic problems. **Their high dependency ratio**, due to the high percentage of children and the increasing number of the elderly, necessitates the participation of all women of working age in development. This participation affects the policies of family planning, because woman's work outside the home makes her opt for a smaller number of children. In addition, it helps eliminate sexual discrimination, modify the concept of woman's social role and abolish the traditional division of labor. It also leads to the gradual elimination of the veil which forms a handicap to her outside work and her social contacts.

Woman's participation in development is a key to her total liberation. In order to participate in development she must be engaged in meaningful work; in order to engage in meaningful work she must be liberated and well trained. Therefore, a woman who lacks education and training should join a literacy course and search out training centers which prepare adults for productive work. Her liberation from ignorance and stagnation will raise her morale and increase her self-confidence. It will make of her a new person. Education and work are intrinsically related; one imposes the other. Work without education has little value; education without work is sterile.

These factors have resulted in an abundance of studies, all over the world, on two closely-related topics: 1) struggle against illiteracy, especially among women, who have a higher illiteracy rate than men; 2) full participation of women in development, including analysis of the situation which would make this participation possible.

(1) See *Al-Raida*, Feb. 1, 1982, Vol.V, No. 19, p. 8

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Dr. Jamal Karam Harfouche

**A pediatrician whose life has
been a glowing achievement.**

When Jamal Karam received her medical degree in pediatrics in 1941, she was the first woman doctor from South Lebanon, her birthplace being the resort village of Jezzine. Although a number of Lebanese women have obtained medical degrees and have practiced medicine before and since, Dr. Karam Harfouche deserves special mention because she has gone far beyond the mere practice of medicine.

She came from a family of five boys and two girls; except for the elder daughter who married young, the children were able, in spite of limited financial means, to gain university educations and occupy leadership positions as university professors and government officers. Jamal was an outstanding student at Sidon Girls' Secondary School, the American Junior College and the American University of Beirut.

Besides her private practice in pediatrics from 1943-46 and from 1950-58, she was a professor in the School of Medicine at A.U.B. In 1958, she received a fellowship from the World Health Organization (WHO) for the study of Public Health at Harvard University, where she earned a degree in Social Medicine and Hygiene in 1959 and a doctorate in Public Health in 1965. Her new specialization opened new areas for her in active service. She became chairman of Community Health Practice, School of Public Health at A.U.B. from 1964-1975, professor of Maternal and Child Health from 1967-1977, Professor Emeritus of Maternal and Child Health in 1979. She has also been advisor to many local and international organizations, including the WHO, to which she has been advisor and consultant since 1968. She has held presidencies and vice-presidencies of several health committees, among which is the Executive Committee of the International Union for Child Welfare; and she was the founder of the Lebanese Union for Child Welfare, the Lebanese Society for the Physically Disabled and the Federation of the Non-Governmental Agencies in Lebanon.



Besides this prolific activity, Dr. Harfouche has done valuable research work in her areas of interest, published 33 books and articles and presented several papers at various occasions. The topics treated in her research are: Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning, Growth and Development, Experimental Work in the Delivery of Health Care at the Primary Level, Clinical and Social Pediatrics, Community Health and Development.

Her achievements have attracted the attention of national and international organizations, which have honored her with awards and prizes, some of which are: The Golden Merit of the Cedars; the Research Grant, National Institute of Health, Bethesda, Maryland; Grand Prix Humanitaire de France; Said Akl Prize and the Award of the Lebanese Association, "Friends of the Book".

When asked about the secret of her steadfast success, she emphasized the encouragement of family and friends, her faith in herself, her optimism and her indefatigable energy. These qualities are well reflected in the genuine smile which illumines Dr. Harfouche's face and never fails her even under stress and difficulty.

Critical Notes Regarding Women's Role in Development⁽¹⁾

Most studies regarding women in the Arab world deal with such questions as the number of working women, the ratios of educated and illiterate women, women's health, maternity centers, child welfare centers and the like. Studies may also cover women's share in the labor force but the results of these studies are usually misleading because they do not include housekeepers, part-time workers and rural women whose work in fields and farms is considered part of their family duties.

The following notes try to call attention to conditions impeding woman's work in Syria, a topic usually neglected by researchers.

1. Scarcity of day - nurseries for children of working women.

In Syria, the government provides day-care centers for 20% of the state-employed women. In private sectors, less than 10% of the working women are provided with day-care centers for their children. These centers are largely concentrated in the capital and are almost non-existent in the provinces.

2. Unemployment

According to data collected in 1978, the percentage of women looking for work in Syria was 12% as compared to 15% in Lebanon and 23% in Tunis. Recent studies on women seem to neglect the problems and causes of their unemployment.

In encouraging women's integration in development the following basic question should be asked: what principles should guide us in our projects? For example, is it of prime importance to organize training courses for women in sewing, typing, domestic work, accounting, music, decoration and local crafts? These activities may be useful to housekeepers but they have little productive value. Priority in women's training must be given to more productive projects, such as modern poultry-raising, care of greenhouses, manufacture of house furniture, construction and repair of electronic devices and the like.

3. Women's Image in Mass Media

Television films often represent women either as slaves in rulers' palaces, entertainers and court intriguers or idle creatures given to luxury and corruption.

Industrial firms exploit television for advertising their beauty products, furs and luxurious

cars, which lure people into spending their earnings on unnecessary items.

Television producers should be pressured to present varied programs, consisting of sketches, plays, fiction and serial stories, whose function is not only to entertain but also to inform and instruct people, to help them give up stereotypes and adopt a new way of life.

4. Women's Education

There is a general complaint about the high rate of women's illiteracy in the Arab world. In spite of the growing number of girls in elementary schools, the number of drop-outs who leave school before finishing elementary education is very large and creates an element of worry. If we take Syria as an example, we are told that between 1970 and 1979 the number of illiterate women increased by 83,000. In 1970-1979, about 100,000 women attended literacy classes, but in that period, fewer than 62,000 completed the courses.

5. Lack of Educational Planning

The publication of figures indicating an increase in the number of schools and students is not enough to prove educational progress. More important is an evaluation of the educational level, a study of the quality of teachers, the adequacy of their training, their capacity for work and for growth in their profession. It is generally observed that young people, become teachers only as a last resort, that most teachers complain of heavy schedules and low salaries and that they use their free hours in additional paid work instead of taking part in cultural activities.

At Damascus University, the number of enrolled students in the first year is relatively large but only 10 to 20 percent of that number graduate. Many of the graduates find no employment or are employed in jobs which do not relate to their majors. Out of 74 students who graduated from the social science department, 24 were female; out of these 24 only two are employed in jobs related to their major.

(1) Summary of a talk presented by Dr. Khodr Zakariyya at a panel held in Tunis, 21-28 November 1982, published in *Dirasat Arabiyya*, no. 5, year 19, March.

Population Problems in Egypt⁽¹⁾

The High Dependency Ratio, A Challenge for Economic Development

Egypt shares with other Arab countries the problem of the raised dependency ratio, a problem that results from a variety of factors: 1) the high birth rate, 2) the increasing numbers of the elderly, 3) the unemployment of a large number of young males and 4) a number of women who, for one reason or another, leave their jobs.

The percentage of dependents increased from 58% in 1937 to 66% in 1979, due to the following reasons:

1. Increased education for the young.
2. Decreased number of employed people, six years and above, because of the decreasing death rate.
3. Increased numbers of children below six.

Low Participation of Women in the Labour Force: 1.4 – 1.9% of the total population, compared to 22.7 – 23.8% for males in 1960 and 1976 respectively.

The actual dependency ratio⁽³⁾ reached 236% in 1960. The ratio was 132% for children, 8.1% for the elderly and 95.9% for the unemployed individuals considered in the labor force. Most of the latter group were females.

During the last ten years, there has been a slow drop in the actual dependency ratio, from 269% to 173%. This is due to the drop in birth rate and the increased participation of women in the work force. However, the gain is insignificant because of the low average income in Egypt: 5% of that in industrialized countries. Although the income seems to have increased in the last 20 years from 49.5 to 143.7 L.E., it has actually decreased due to the increase in prices.

- a) Consequences of the high dependency ratios:
 - Low individual income.
 - Low standard of living.
 - Decreased job opportunities due to low investment.
 - Deterioration of the national economy.

- b) Elements of the problem:
 - High birth rate.
 - Low level of education leading to more unemployment.

- Increased number of the elderly.
- Low individual average income.
- Underemployment of those who work in agriculture with their families.

Management of the Problem

- Decreasing the birth rate.
- Increasing the education level and industrialization.
- Creation of new training centers for youth to detract them from early marriage.
- Creation of social-care centers where women can be trained for productive jobs.
- Creation of rural industries with adjoint training centers.
- Providing housewives with facilities for outside work: day-care centers for children and adequate maternity leaves.

(1) Condensed from Population Studies, 9th year, no. 61, April - June 1981, **Population Problems in Egypt** by Mohamed El-Motassem Moustapha Ahmed, pp. 31-36.

(2) See "Demographic Structure of the Lebanese Population" by Francois Farah, in **Al-Raida** Feb. 1, 1983, Vol. VI, no. 23, p. 8.

(3) Actual dependency ratio =
$$\frac{\text{Actual young age dependents} + \text{old age dependents} + \text{no. of unemployed male and female at employment age} \times 100}{\text{no. of employed individuals above 6 years of age.}}$$

Stereotyped Language and Creative Language⁽¹⁾

In this article Claude Talahite⁽²⁾ insists that words are important, in that they are able to fashion people and create a whole world. Every time we take hold of a word we have power in our hands.

According to the author, language may be utilized in two ways: slavish repetition of stereotypes (cliches), or creation of a new language. The first is a passive discourse; the second is active.

Examples of stereotyped language connected with the discourse on women:

"By the side of man", "our women", "honest women", "woman is dangerous", "people will talk".

What do these phrases evoke? What connotations do they imply?

"By the side of man" suggests that woman's place is beside a man, that she depends on him, struggles

for him and cannot live away from him. It is a position of dependence.

"Our Women" means "the women of our group"; it suggests a closed horizon, an atmosphere of xenophobia; the adjective "our" suggests a possessive attitude, and the necessity of giving protection to a dependent creature.

"Honest Women": The term suggests a class system dividing people into honest and dishonest. Applied to women, it refers particularly to sexual behavior, which is the main criterion, perhaps the only criterion of her honesty; applied to men, this term means something totally different; it means integrity, truthfulness, upright behavior.

The particular applications of this term set up men and women as two separate groups. Men live their lives outside the home, in the world of business, while women lead a secluded life inside their homes. This Division remains **illogical** as long as women's honesty or honor cannot be separated from men's honor. They cannot do wrong without the complicity of men.

"Woman is dangerous" A stereotype used by men alone. It means that she is dangerous to men and clearly affirms that the world is a world of men because men are the only creatures that exist. Woman, because she is dangerous, should be eliminated, expelled from men's world.

"People will talk": A stereotype frequently used by women in conversation, it shows how they are dominated by fear of what people say. People's attitude is their rule of conduct. They do not choose to do something because it is right or wrong, but because it pleases or displeases other people. To these women morality has no intrinsic value; it is merely a show. Whatever they do without being seen becomes legal and permitted; right conduct is a form of hypocrisy.

This last cliché results from women being subjected to the sort of system of supervision described in Assia Djebbar's story, "Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement"⁽³⁾ They live in a state of continuous fear of being heard and seen, which imposes on them silence as a supreme virtue. If they talk, they feel compelled either to whisper or to use stereotyped, traditional and imitative language, actions which keep them from revealing their true selves.

Assia Djebbar, in her book, warns women against maintaining silence, using stereotyped language, and whispering, actions which, she argues, result from fear and cowardice. She invites them to talk plainly, loudly, to choose their words

freely, to present their own point of view, and finally to use creative, instead of stereotyped language. Liberty, one may conclude, imposes personal, creative activity, including personal language.

1. Abstract of an article by Claude Talahite, **Document de Travail du GRFA** (Groupe de Recherche sur les Femmes Algérienne) N° 7, 1983, pp. 19-30.
2. See **Al-Raida**, May 1, 1982, Vol. 5, no. 20, p. 5: "Algerian Women in Their Apartment" by Claude Talahite.
3. See **Al-Raida**, Op. cit.

POEM

Apology to Children ⁽¹⁾

O children of the world
How great is your innocence!
My skin will serve you as a cover!
Pardon me
I own nothing but torn up skin.
In the holes of silence
I own nothing but silence
Climbing over the side of time.
Pardon,
My words shiver
For the standing sword
Is ready to fall
On the heads of words,
The prison cell
With a widely open mouth
Frightens me.
O children of the world
O children of my country
O my child
(I am afraid)
That my song of love
Will fall on the road,
Unable to reach you,
The whip of the executioner
Will eat up my lip.
Prevent it from singing you
The song of falling rain
and rising sun ..
Pardon ..
Is it enough to give you my heart
And make of my mortal body
A bridge of time?

Hamda Khamis
Poet and journalist from Bahrain

(1) Translated from the Arabic.

Tribute to Nadia Tueni



Nadia Tueni, a great woman poet of Lebanon was snatched away by death on the 20th of June 1983, after a long battle with illness. Those who knew her, and those who didn't, mourned her; for she knew how to perfectly express the often forgotten ties existing between people and their land, beauty and destruction, love and hatred, life and death.

Reading her poems was like discovering forgotten pictures locked away in the drawers of our hearts. Nadia Tueni transported us towards new horizons where dreams have a different savor. She uncovered the past without threatening the present, and constantly startled us with her choice of words. For no one knew how to place a word in a sentence or isolate it from its habitual context like she did.

Nadia Tueni was described by writers, poets, journalists and politicians alike as "the chanting bird of Lebanon", the "white pearl", "the woman of light", the "sister of love" and the "lady of the Orient".

Last goodbyes are painful. Among the many written for her was one entitled: "Eyewitnesses Said". It says: "She wrote her last poem, hid it for Him under the pillow, put on her white dress and went away with dawn. Eyewitnesses said: she passed over the mountains and sprinkled them with 20 love-poems. On her shoulders a bag full of poems and love and her long black hair". (1)

Great poets never die, but what words can fill the big black void left by a beloved one?

SHE

Was born in Beirut in 1935.

Studied at the Girl's College of Beirut, at the French Academy in Athens, then in St. Joseph University, Lebanon.

Married on the 31st of December 1954, the well known journalist Ghassan Tueni.

Has two sons: Gibran and Makram.

Wrote her first collection of poems in 1963, it was entitled "Les Textes Blonds".

Wrote "L'Age d'Ecume" in 1965, for which she obtained the "Said Akl Prize of Literature".

Wrote in 1963, "Juin et les Mécéantes", in 1970 a play called the "Faramane" for the International Festival of Baalbeck.

Published another book of poems, in 1972 and called it: "Poemes pour une Histoire", for which she obtained the French Academy Prize in 1973.

Wrote "Le Rêveur de la Terre" (1975) with drawings by Laure Kerbage, then "Liban, 20 Poemes Pour Un Amour" (1979) with drawings by Amine el Bacha.

Her last collection of poems was published last year and entitled; "Archives d'une Guerre Sentimentale du Liban"

Died on the 20th of June 1983, after an 18 years long battle with cancer.

Wafa' Stephan

Nadia Tueni: INVENTORY

From all which is earth I accept the message.
From that which is garden I accept the force. A
smell of the future settles down upsetting a child
on his way.

We will make suns behind the wall, within your
eyes of painted moons and in your cool-running
hands.

If death is perfect beauty, each life inherits a
morning of birds, gentle and cruel.

From that which is day I will conceive the
night (say nothing it is done). In your steps a white
foreboding love.

This evening, between me and the first arrival,
a word arches on the sky. Because from a cry I will
build my life.

Translator

Elaine Gardiner

(1) Antoine Sebalani — *Al Nahar*, June 23, 1983

(Poem and photo by courtesy of *Al-Nahar*)

The Problem of Illiteracy in Egypt⁽¹⁾

A. Increase in number of illiterates:

In spite of the decrease in the number of illiterates from 70.3% in 1960 to 65.3% in 1966, the absolute number of illiterates has increased from 12.7 million to 13.8 million during the same period. The increase is due to the high rate of population growth.

B. **Professional illiteracy**, i.e. lack of professional training, is more widely spread than "alphabetical illiteracy". The number of professional illiterates reached 94% of the total number of those 15 years old and over in 1976.

C. **Percentage of children not in school:** 40% in 1960; about 30% in 1976.

In 1976, less than 1% of the total number of illiterates completed studies in the illiteracy elimination classes.

D. **Inability of the educational system to handle the illiteracy problem.** Causes:

1. Environmental cultural retardation: deficiency of the educational stimulus in the child's environment.

2. Incorrect order of educational priorities:
a. Absence of clear educational goals at the primary level.

b. Theoretical approach to education unattractive to students.

c. Costly process with little income.

3. Imbalance of the income distribution structure:

a. Inability of poor families to afford the expenses necessary for education.

b. Poor health conditions retard mental development.

c. Poor quality of teaching.

E. **Treatment of the Problem:**

1. Eliminating poverty and creating a favorable home atmosphere.

2. Improving methods used for eliminating illiteracy.

3. Creating educational policies which are in harmony with economic, social, political, educational, cultural, and organizational policies.

(1) Outline of an article by Khaled Abdallah Loutfi, **Population Studies**, no. 62, July/September 1982, pp. 79-82.

STUDY

Women's Social Role - How It Relates to Her Self-Concept⁽¹⁾

The author of the study raises the following questions:

1. Does a working woman's self-concept differ from that of a non-working woman?

2. Do working women and non-working women perceive the concept of a "woman's role" differently?

3. Do they perceive differently the conflict surrounding a woman's role and the significance of that conflict?

The experimental group of the study consisted of 50 married women, aged 23 - 45; each had one child or more, and each was a university graduate, working outside the home. To this sample was added a control group of 50 women who did not work outside the home but who were of the same age

and had the same status and education as the working women.

The study consisted of eight chapters, of which the first five presented the objectives of the study, its importance, the various theories regarding a woman's role, her social condition and the different concepts of the ego.

In chapter 7, she discussed the methodology of her work and reported on a preliminary enquiry, in which she had interviewed ten housewives who fulfilled the conditions of the sample. This enquiry revealed two kinds of self-concept among interviewees: the traditional, which limits a woman's role to that of wife, mother and housekeeper; the equalitarian which gives both husband and wife

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equal shares in responsibility without differentiation between male and female.

The marital role as defined by the study included the following activities which may or may not be shared by the couple: authority, housework, child care, personal interests, social activity, upbringing, work and maintenance.

Tests were used to identify the sub-conscious nature of the self-concept, its perception and the role conflict as projected by the subject on the test cards.

Results of the Questionnaire, chapter 8:

1. Concept of the Marital Role

The result showed a difference between working and non-working women's concept of the marital role. The working group believed that the couple should take equal responsibility in maintaining the family.

2. Self-Concept

The results did not give any indices of differentiation between the two groups regarding self-acceptance. The results did show that non-working women have a significantly higher level of social acceptance; it can be concluded that society still regards woman primarily as a wife, mother and housekeeper and secondly as a worker.

3. General Comprehension of the Role

a. The group of working housewives, even those who had the highest level of self-acceptance, revealed a traditional concept of their role. They were dependent, masochistic and suffered from an excess of worries and responsibilities, while their idea of the role itself seemed hazy, diffuse and contradictory.

b. The group of non-working housewives who had the highest level of self-acceptance equally showed a traditional concept of their role: an ambivalent self-image. A deeper analysis proved that this groups possessed a negative, masochistic, dependent ego. The role conflict among them revealed a desire to change their traditional role into an equalitarian one, though they lacked the positive means of change, such as education and capacity for work.

c. The third group was made up of those members having the lowest proportion of self-

acceptance and included both working and non-working women. Three different responses to the question of role concept appeared: traditional, equalitarian and an amalgamation of both. The majority of the members of this group however, had a traditional concept of self.

Just like the role concept, the self-concept of this group took a variety of forms: the positive self, the traditional negative self and the dual or ambivalent, dependent self, all appeared in the results.

Conclusion

The variety and ambivalence revealed in women's self-concept and social role in Egypt reflect the contradictions of social attitudes regarding woman's role. Woman's self-concept tends to be negative and dependent; in some cases it shows a dual nature, i.e. positive – negative. This result carries a close relation between self-concept and role concept. The role conflict appeared in various ways; the general causes of conflict, including the multiplicity of tasks, the rejection of the present status and the desire for change.

Finally, woman's role and its relation to her self-concept are defined through their economic, social and cultural factors. To impose on a woman the roles of childbearing and pleasure-giving tool, as complements to her femininity, constitutes an encroachment on her right to freedom.

On the other hand, a woman who lives from her own work and enjoys personal freedom, while rejecting her female role, may have to face social criticism. She is torn between two options: remaining an enslaved female or changing into a free male. Here the following questions may be raised: are all males free? Doesn't the struggle for freedom include both males and females, though it may be heavier and more demanding on the latter?

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- (1) Summary of an M.A. thesis presented by Kareema Ed-Dassouky, Egypt, published by *Majallatul-Ulum-il-Ijtima'iyya*, (Journal of the Social Sciences), Kuwait University, no. 4, year 10, December 1982, pp. 311-317.

National Conference of the Lebanese Women's Council 23-4-1983

After 8 years of war during which Lebanese women were busy being wives, mothers, breadwinners, comforters, nurses, volunteers, party members and sometimes fighters, the Lebanese Council of Women called its 105 affiliated associations for a National Conference on the theme "Role of Women in the Save Lebanon Campaign".

The conference, held at the "House of the Future", was attended by more than a thousand delegates in addition to eminent political, literary and diplomatic figures. At the end of the day it came out with the following recommendations and claims:

1. The Lebanese Women's Council, while it confirms the restoration of national unity, places its potentialities at the disposal of the Lebanese Government and claims a national policy integrating women in the process of reconstruction and development.
2. An official corps should be created for realizing this policy in cooperation with the Lebanese women's associations.
3. Instauration of a national system of education requiring loyalty to Lebanon alone, and, as a means to that end, creating a unified personal status code of laws leading to a solid national union.
4. All foreign troops without any exception, must be evacuated from Lebanon.
5. The new policy to be followed requires the following steps:
 - a. Studies on the status of women pointing out priorities regarding their needs and possibilities, including those of the rural woman, the elderly woman, the single woman and the war widows particularly.
 - b. Preparation of a plan of action in which women would participate at all levels and stages.
 - c. Planning an information policy which

aims to eliminate all prejudices regarding women and rehabilitate their image in the mass media, society and in the eyes of women themselves.

d. Amendments to the penal code and civil law for the purpose of eliminating all discrimination against women existing in any legal field or in the labor code.

e. Adoption by the Government of all international decrees and decisions relating to the Charter of Human Rights.

f. Giving women the opportunity for adequate training and education, which would ensure their participation in all aspects of development and their promotion to leading administrative positions in both the public and the private sector.

g. Intensification of woman's presence in non-government organizations such as the workers' syndicates, parties, associations and official delegations.

h. Elimination of both alphabetical and professional illiteracy among women.

i. Adaptation of the structure of the Women's Council and of its affiliated societies to the present needs of the country.

The final verdict at the end of the Conference was a mixed one. Many women who had hoped to come out with definite answers and a clear plan of action were disappointed to find out that the final recommendations were more a reiteration of old demands for the improvement of women's status in Lebanon. Others declared that despite these drawbacks, the Conference was a very important event for the Women's Movement in Lebanon because it reopened the dialogue between the various women's organizations who had worked in isolation during the last eight years of war.

Rose Ghurayyib
and
Wafa' Stephan

RECENTLY RECEIVED BY IWSAW

Breast - Feeding Patterns

Breast-Feeding Patterns is the title of a 1982 publication by the WHO/EMRO, prepared by Dr. J.K. Harfouche, M.D., Professor Emeritus of Maternal and Child Health at the American University of Beirut. The book is a review of different studies covering 29 countries in the Eastern Mediterranean

Region, 16 of which are Arabic speaking. These countries are predominantly Muslim; they total 250 million inhabitants and vary greatly in size and in levels of socio-economic development.

The 323 page publication is divided into two

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parts and includes an 18-page bibliography. The first part deals with the cultural and historical backgrounds against which the present patterns of infant feeding practices have developed. The second part is a country-by-country review of the different studies, with a personal section on the traditional use of particular substances administered by mothers to their infants, either internally or externally, (e.g. Kohl or Kohol, qat, dried poppy or soukur ..). A short review of menstrual taboos and evil-eye beliefs which play an important role in child-rearing practices is also included. The author then draws up a number of conclusions, the most important being:

1. Despite the unique benefits to be gained from human milk, benefits, demonstrated by Western science, the Eastern Mediterranean Region as a whole is beginning to turn more and more to bottle-feeding practices, and to suffer from the high risks connected with those practices. The only regions spared till now are distant rural areas where social or economic conditions do not favor artificial feeding. The hardest hit are the newly urbanized marginal communities.

2. Bottle-feeding seems to undermine deeply rooted traditions and disrupt the dyadic interaction between mother and child, resulting in immediate and long range effects on human behavior and personality development.

3. The use of artificial feeding now being practiced by over-populated countries, seems to undermine natural fertility control devices prolonged by breast-feeding.

According to the author, the most important lesson to be learned is that, in the region, breast-feeding has scarcely been studied at all in the overall context of child-rearing patterns. Unless these patterns are investigated in the immediate future, we will have trouble finding proper solutions to the continuing decline of breast-feeding. Therefore there is a need, says Dr. Harfouche, for continued mass education on this subject and or person-to-person campaigns to promote the return to breast-feeding, the most important target being the urban elite women.

Book review by
Wafa Stephan

Sexual Behavior in an Islamic, Dependent, Capitalist Society⁽¹⁾

The author of this book, Fatima Mernissi is a Moroccan sociologist, university professor and writer. She is the author of **Beyond the Veil**⁽²⁾, a dynamic work on woman's position in Islamic society, its present degradation and the inevitability of change.

The introduction presents the book as an attempt to set forth woman's status in **Morocco** (or El-Maghreb) under three headings:

a. Women's condition in the poorer classes, constituting 95% of Moroccan women, as presented through fields studies and statistics.

b. The ideological stereotypes which stand in the way of change in intersexual relations.

c. The status of the Moroccan family and the contribution of recent economic changes to the disruption and decline of this institution.

The articles are provided with figures, statistics, references and footnotes. They sometimes take the form of interviews with representative employees and working women, and, as a whole, they show the desire of the author to move from theory to fact in treating women's problems.

In the first section of the book we read that a woman in Moroccan rural society, (Al-Badiya), performs 60 - 80% of the farming activities, the majority of African women perform a similar amount. She is equally overburdened in urban areas where she constitutes the bulk of the labor force in the textile industry and in domestic service.

Among poorer classes, the rate of illiteracy among women may reach as high as 90%. This handicap reduces their capacity for work to a minimum and deprives them of the possibilities of promotion. Woman's farming activities are usually unpaid simply because they constitute part of her family work, while her work in urban areas is underpaid; and lacks the facilities which would alleviate her double burden. The hard conditions under which she lives destroy her creative ability in the textile industry and prevent her self-realization.

Modern Culture and Sexual Relations

Modern culture has not affected the traditional attitude of men toward women. Men are the sole

heads of the family; women are considered as inferior creatures whose function is to please men, to serve them and give them children. Any change in the laws of the personal status is opposed by conservatives.

Women of the poorer classes get married to poor men. They usually have a double task because they do the housework and also work outside if given the chance to do so. The Moroccan code of laws, *Al-Mudawwana*, does not mention woman's right to work except in a vague manner. A man may forbid his wife to work outside the home. Her housework is considered non-productive and entitles her only to subsistence. *Al-Mudawwana* protects the right to ownership of rich women. Poor women have no such rights because they own nothing and they are not even mentioned in the personal status laws. In Bedouin or rural communities, women are usually deprived of their right to inheritance. Lack of technical training compels them to accept inferior jobs which offer no promotion. Wretchedness and want may drive them to seek a living in prostitution.

Matrimonial Problems

Honor and dignity have a special significance in Moroccan society. While in more advanced countries these terms mean respect and esteem shown to a person because of personal achievement, here they are synonymous with "ird", which means a woman's chastity. A man's honor depends on this ability to keep his women-folk chaste and pure; otherwise he is looked down upon by society. A woman's shame is his shame and has to be washed off by blood. This degrading tradition has led women, particularly those of the well-to-do class, to resort to the practice of artificial virginity, a costly operation in which the hymen is restored after defloration, even after repeated coitus. In this manner appearances are saved, the bridegroom is tricked into believing that he has married a virgin; trickery becomes the rule in married life and is passed on from one generation to another. There is flagrant injustice in requiring chastity from woman alone while a man is free at any time to practice illegal sexual relations. Logical conduct requires him to be true to himself and to practice the chastity he imposes on women. Such a requirement would arouse laughter among Arab males. Yet, in China, the leaders of the Revolution have imposed chastity before marriage on both men and women without arousing any protest from the former.

Economic difficulties have recently contri-

buted to a gradual disappearance of polygamy. Slavery was abolished in the thirties by government decree. However *Al-Mudawwana* formally prohibits neither polygamy nor unilateral divorce. Hence a woman lives in constant fear of repudiation, divorce or polygamy and is led to use all sorts of stratagems to prevent her husband from using his "rights".

Another change affecting woman's status nowadays is her freedom to move outside the home. She is allowed to go to school; many women are receiving higher education, and a fair number of the educated class are engaged in outside work. Women students and working women are more exposed to men's aggressive conduct now than during their life of seclusion. The relative freedom that women enjoy gives rich men the opportunity to lure those of the poorer classes with their money and take them as concubines.

The Moroccan Family

The economic structure of the Moroccan family has undergone changes which have served to weaken its ties. The economic contribution of women and children working in factories and elsewhere has encouraged a sense of individualism and freedom among the working members. Emigration to urban areas where work is more available has been a factor in family disruption.

According to family laws, the husband should be the sole provider for the family. He has to provide for his wife, for his mother and father, for his male children, as long as they are minors and for the females as long as they are under his roof.

Facts do not always correspond to theories. Fathers are not always able to fulfill what the law requires of them. Recent statistics reveal the following changes in the Moroccan family:

1. Its size has tended to shrink in urban areas where the family averages five members; in rural areas the average family has six or more.
2. There is a general growth in the size of the Moroccan population which will presumably reach 36 million by the end of the century. Presently it is about 18 million.

(Continued on page 12)

(1) *As-Suluk ul-Jinsi fi Mujtam' Islami, Rasmali, Taba'i* by Fatima Mernissi translated from the French by Orzwell Fatima Al-Zahra, Dar -el-Hadatha, Beirut, 1982.

(2) See *Al-Raida*, May 1, 1980, vol. III, no. 12, p. 14 and 11.

(Continued from page 11)

3. The majority are concentrated in a few areas, while other areas remain underpopulated.

4. Unemployment and emigration to urban areas are two factors in the family economy: about 30% of the potentially active population are unemployed; 60% of Moroccan families live in rural areas; 90,000 of them emigrate every year to seek employment in cities, and some emigrate to European countries.

5. Emigration and unemployment affect the personality of the child who feels alienated in a new environment, or suffers from want because of his father's unemployment. In the latter case, he is exposed to malnutrition and to poor sanitary conditions which make normal growth impossible for him.

Role of the State

The State has recently stepped in to help needy parents secure decent lodgings, to provide for their children's nutrition and education and thus to prevent family disruption. The intervention of the state has partly deprived the fathers of their traditional authority and has forced them to face problems of bureaucracy, red tape and unequal distribution of opportunities.

Problems facing the social functions of the State

1. Unemployment among youth.
2. Delinquency of adolescents.

Statistics of 1971 show that 42% of the youth below 15 years of age are in schools; the rest are either inactive or employed in rural areas, or in domestic or industrial sectors, where they are

exposed to exploitation. Many of them are abandoned by their parents and are dragged into delinquency.

Reports on interviews with women working in the textile industry or as domestic servants, covering the last section of the book, point out the following problems:

1. Alienation of women migrating to cities.
2. Double burden of women who have to work in and outside the home.
3. Frequent divorce among poor families; 50% of working women are divorcees.
4. High proportion of women in the rug-weaving and textile industries whose national income is evaluated at millions of dirhems, while the women who constitute the backbone of these industries live in poverty.
5. Needy, illiterate and unemployed women turning to prostitution.
6. The state of domestic servants who are looked down upon, overworked, exploited and excluded from the labor code.

Conclusion

This brief account (200 pp) of sexual relations in Morocco leads the author to conclude that these relations will carry the mark of fraud and hypocrisy as long as men retain their despotic and anti-social attitude, especially when it is ratified by law.

Modern changes in Moroccan society have created new family problems: disruption, emigration, unemployment, and state intervention. On the other hand, traditional behavior tries to perpetuate the domination and exploitation of the population by privileged, ruling classes, working to monopolize the country's wealth.

Adab-ul-Mar 'a fil-Jazirah wal Khaleej il-Arabi⁽¹⁾ (Women's Literary Output in Arabia and the Arab Gulf)

The Kuwaiti author of this book, Layla Muhammad Salih, started writing at an early age. She has contributed to Kuwaiti newspapers, magazines and radio and television programs. In 1978, she published her first book on women writers in Kuwait. That same year, she obtained a "licence" in literature from the Arab University of Beirut, and expects to do further study.

Her work on women's literary production in Arabia and the Arab Gulf consists of short biographies of about 40 women poets, short-story writers, journalists and contributors to radio and

television programs, followed by excerpts from their writings. She includes writers from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

In her introduction, the author points out the importance of the recent literary revival in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries, particularly among women. Her book, which gives glimpses of these works, reflects common characteristics and aspirations among the women of that area. She conducts personal interviews with the authors, gaining first-hand information about their experience and ac-

tivities. She admits that, in her compilation, she did not follow any selective pattern, but joined together those who achieved some distinction in their writings and those who are still at the experimental stage, provided that some of their output has been published in papers or magazines.

As a matter of fact, it is possible for those who have been following the recent literary movement in the Arab world, to detect the multiple influences exerted on these women by the modern literature of other Arab countries, like Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, literature which, in turn, has been influenced profoundly by Western literature. The published excerpts include poems, short stories and articles. Most of the poetic specimens take the form of prose poems or free verse. They contain local color, internal dialogues and other devices of modern expression. The short stories follow the emotional, jerky style of the prose poems, reflecting an intensity of feeling, a sense of alienation and an attitude of rebellion against tradi-

tional concepts, as well as against traditional literary forms.

Most of the writings revolve around women's personal problems, complaints and protests. In a few cases, they describe the misery of unprivileged classes. The limited area in which they move leads these women to seek variety in expression. There is an emphasis on form and a real effort toward innovation in style. Some of them, especially those who came in direct contact with Western literature in foreign universities, reveal the impact of contemporary English and other Western literary models.

To this group of educated women, who live in a state of relative seclusion, and have little opportunity for recreation and self-expression, writing constitutes an escape and a form of relaxation. It also reveals daring and sincerity among many of them; talent and ambition among others.

(1) Published in Kuwait, Al-Yaqza Press, 1982.

Family - Kin Relationships in Contemporary Kuwait Society⁽¹⁾

During the last three decades, there has been a continuing debate over the impact of urbanization and industrialization on family-kin relationships in Kuwaiti society.

Studies concerning this topic in Arab countries are few: those that have been done all postulate the persistence of strong family-kin relationships in spite of urbanization. The study conducted by Dr. Fahed Thakeb Al-Thakeb examines those relationships from the following standpoints: general contact between family and kin, mutual help in need, business partnerships among relatives, marital relations and contact during leisure time.

The study produced the following findings:

1. About 35% of the sample visit their relatives every day; 45% visit them weekly. Visits are more frequent among those who form part of an extended family. Women exchange visits less frequently than males but they converse by telephone more frequently.

2. Assistance in times of need is extensive among all segments of the sample: assistance in cases of sickness, old age, child care, need for employment, counseling, financial aid. The first priority of assistance goes to brothers and sisters, then come parents and cousins.

3. In the field of business, 24% of the private businessmen in the sample have partners who are also kinsmen; 27% of those employed in government administrative offices have relatives, mostly brothers, in the same department. Those belonging

to the upper socio-economic class or to the younger generation show some deviation from the above line of conduct.

4. In the recreational field, 76% of the sample spend their leisure hours with members of their nuclear family; 11% with relatives and friends. A large proportion of the educated youth and of the upper socio-economic stratum prefer spending their leisure time with friends instead of kinsmen.

5. Endogamous marriages persist in 48% of the sample. Of these, 79% married their cousins. This practice tends to diminish among the highly educated and the upper socio-economic classes. With the spread of education and further contact between the sexes, endogamous marriage is expected to become less and less popular.

6. Inter-Family conflicts are difficult to study because Kuwaitis in general like to save appearances and to pretend that all is well within their families.

As a conclusion, family ties are on the whole quite strong among Kuwaiti families but they are beginning to weaken among the educated youth and the upper socio-economic strata, showing their adaptation to new conditions and to a modernized way of life.

(1) Abstract of a study conducted by Dr. Fahed Thakeb Al-Thakeb, published in Arabic in the *Annals of the Faculty of Arts*, Kuwait University, Vol. 3, 1982.

Pakistan Women's Institute (PWI) Newsletter

The "Pakistan Women's Institute" is a member of the Asian Women's Institute (AWI), an organization founded in 1975, comprising women's studies centers established during that year in eight major women's universities and colleges of Asia. In January 1983, the **Philippines Women's Institute**, a cluster of women's Studies and Development Programs in the Philippines, was affiliated with the Asian Women's Institute. IWSAW, located in Beirut University College, is a member of AWI too. **Al-Raida**, IWSAW's newsletter, has published articles introducing the Asian Women's Institute and reporting on its activities.⁽¹⁾

The latest number of the Pakistan Women's Institute News Letter reports on the celebration of Women's Day, March 8, 1983, and on the Women's Day Award for eminent women, granted this year, to Begum Ismat Samad Shah in recognition of her outstanding services to the nursing profession.

The editorial by Khawar Kazi carries an ardent call to all women to support the peace campaign. An article on the Asian Women's Institute by Mira Phailbus, Director of PWI and President of AWI, points out the intense suffering caused by war in such countries as Kampuchea, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon. The author mentions the efforts of AWI members to liberate women from illiteracy and to promote their role in society. She emphasizes two areas necessary to woman's ultimate liberation and development: 1) adult education and 2) changing women's attitudes toward themselves.

(1) **Al-Raida**, Sept., 1977, no. 2 (English), p. 8; May 1, 1980, vol. III, no. 12 (English), p. 10.

IWSAW PUBLICATIONS

Woman's Image in School Books in Lebanon⁽¹⁾

Dr. Ilham Kallab's study on woman's image in school books in Lebanon, funded by IWSAW, has been abridged in publication into 260 pages, with illustrations, indexes and references. The author makes use of eleven sets of textbooks on reading, grammar, conversation, civic education and vacation exercise books, in order to illustrate the image of woman that is being presented to the young generation. She utilizes content analysis and the statistical method to effect a complete survey of the roles played by a woman at the various stages of her life. The female appears as a static stereotype, copied without change from earlier books into the more recent ones. Division of labor is strictly observed in family activities and in outside social relations.

In her detailed study, Dr. Kallab identifies two characteristics by which woman is defined in the text-books:

1) Woman has no individual identity: she is identified by means of symbols, classifications and functions. She is not even given a personal name. In 90 percent of the cases, she is identified through

her eldest son: mother of so - and - so. Her age is unknown, unless she is a grandmother, seventy years old, or a little girl, seven years old. In the last two cases, she is too old or too young to be a source of temptation to the other sex. The role of mother is faithfully imposed on her throughout three generations: the grandmother or mother of the past, the present mother whose role has been planned and well-defined, and the little girl who is preparing to be a copy of her mother.

2) The first quality of a woman — as an eternal mother — is to take care of her family: to feed its members, serve them and protect them even when she receives little in return. If she works outside the home, it is out of sheer necessity and, in that case, she is socially degraded, despised or pitied.

The book ends with Piaget's question: Is the function of the school to allow the personality of the child to flower or simply to mold it into the fixed patterns of the past?

(1) IWSAW, **Monograph 3**, (Arabic), 1983.

A New Feminist Party in Cairo ⁽¹⁾: Open to men also

The creation of the first political women's party since the July Revolution has been announced in Cairo. Its provisional name will be: "Jam'iyyat-Tadhamun-el-Mar'a (Association of Women's Solidarity). The founding committee includes a number of women writers, journalists, artists and university professors. Among them are Nawal Saadawi who will probably take on the presidency; Malak Abdul Aziz, a well-known poet, wife of the late author Muhammad Mandour; Ni'mat Ahmad Fouad, writer and political leader; Suad Zuhair, Journalist and activist; Atiyat Abnudi, artist and film producer; Amira Matar, chairperson of the philosophy department at Ain-Shams University and Muna Abu Sunna, instructor of English literature at Ain-Shams.

The aim of the Association, according to Dr. Saadawi, is to point out woman's achievements, to encourage her further activity, break the chains that impede her action, rid social and behavioral values of vulgar patterns which threaten the family, and build a new, authentic feminine personality, free from complexes and unhampered by sexual discrimination.

The creation of this Association seems necessary at a time when reactionary movements are inducing women to "go back home". "Our movement," says Dr. Saadawi, "aims to revive and expand the efforts of women pioneers who struggled to ensure our emancipation. We want to participate in economic, social and cultural development at this crucial moment when rising economic problems demand the participation of both men and women".

Membership in the Association is not restricted to women. Men who believe that the country's development depends on women as well as on men, may join. Rural women and female industrial workers are invited to join urban women professionals and employees, in handling problems which are common to all and those which are peculiar to a single group.

1. From an article published in *Al-Wattan*, (a daily paper appearing in Kuwait) Feb. 14, 1983.

Women in North Yemen : Progress and Problems

"A new era has dawned for women in Democratic Yemen but the obstacles to progress are many."

So declared Mrs. Atiqa Esh-Shami, President of the Yemeni Women's Association, in an interview with a correspondent from *Al-Jawhara* (Jewel), the women's magazine published in Qatar, one of the Gulf States.

"The doors of education," she continued, "are open wide for them, from the elementary to the university level. Our women show great interest in education and in work. A fair number of university graduates occupy advanced positions in the government and elsewhere. Another factor in their emancipation is the creation of women's associations, the oldest of which is the one I preside over, founded in Sana'a in 1959."

"Our association has made its way in spite of difficulties; now it is engaged in an illiteracy eradication campaign and in the establishment of sewing, weaving and typing courses for women. The golden year for our women was 1982, when

they obtained the right to take part in elections, and when one of them was elected member of the permanent Committee of the People's Congress."

Asked what main problems the Association was attempting to handle, Mrs. Esh-Shami replied: "There is first the veil, which is still used in an archaic Turkish form: the **charchaf** which covers the body and head completely, leaving only an opening for the eyes. We are trying to substitute the Chador, the Authentic Muslim veil which permits the face and hands to be seen. Another problem is the brideprice, which is so high that it deters young men from marriage. There is also the tradition of encouraging early marriage for women between 10 and 12, when the girl is unripe for her task and unequipped with the necessary amount of education and experience. The traditional wedding ceremonies are also oppressive and out of date; they last for a whole month and are a source of burdensome and meaningless expenditure."

(*Al-Jawhara*, Feb. 1983)

A Lebanese Woman member of the International Council for Rural Development

May Rihani was recently appointed as a member of the International Council for Rural Development, whose central office is in Washington. The Council includes international figures such as Robert McNamara and Cyrus Vance.

May Rihani has been Vice-President of the Transnational Development Organization, which carries out economic projects in the Arab World, North Africa and the Far East. Last month she lectured, at the Berkeley campus of the University of California, on "Development Potentialities in Third World Countries".

(Al-Nahar, 24 - 4 - 1983)

Senegal will have Women in the Police Corps

For the first time in their history Senegalese women have joined the police corps in their country. Nine women, appointed as police officers and inspectors, have been included in the last promotion of the National Police School in Senegal. On the other hand, young women volunteers may from now on start a military career and take part in the entrance contest at the Polytechnic School, which has a military status and trains civil engineers, or at the military School of Health.

(International Women's News, 1983/1, p. 12)

Miss Sameera Al-Daher, the first Lebanese Woman to occupy the post of Ambassador

She is a graduate of the Law School at St. Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon. In 1968, she joined the Diplomatic Corps. After serving at the Lebanese Consulate in Sydney, Australia and at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, she was appointed chargé d'affaires in Peking, China, counselor in London and consul general in New York, a post from which she was promoted to that of Lebanese ambassador to Japan.

(Al-Nahar, 10 - 4 - 1983)

New Moroccan Association of Women

In Rabat, a Moroccan association of women with judicial careers has been created. It aims to establish relations and exchange among women lawyers, to make common their professional and social experience, to collect information regarding their status and career, to study and defend every question and every legal problem relating to the status of women, children and family, to favor the establishment of friendly ties between the members and, finally to contribute to the propagation of peace plans and activities.

(International Women's News, 1983/1, p.12)

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