



al-raida

BEIRUT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

August 1, 1986, Vol. VIII, No. 37



**WOMEN OF
BAHRAIN**

CONTENTS

Editorial

The Status of Bahraini
Women 2

Women of Bahrain

The Changing Roles of Arab
Women in Bahrain 3
Bahraini Women and
Education 5
Bahrain: Facts and
Figures 6

Poetry

Lami'a Abbas Al-'Imarah 7

Book Review

Charlotte Bruner:
"Unwinding Threads" 9

Thesis

"Social-Emotional
Relationship of Preschool
Children in Two
Family Structures" 11

Interview

Hanan Al-Shaykh 13

Bibliography 15

Reports From Around the

World 16

The Status of Bahraini Women

There has never been a feminist movement in Bahrain, emancipation has been coming about in response to economic diversification and substantial improvement in female educational participation rates. In Bahrain, the first primary school for girls opened in 1982; and the first secondary school for girls opened in 1951. The Bahraini government has instituted legislation which makes education compulsory for all children through the eighth grade. It has also developed a comprehensive education plan and thus achieving massive improvement in the Bahraini educational system. According to the Ministry of Information, 14 per cent of the total budget is allocated to education. Great emphasis has been placed on teacher training by establishing two teacher-training institutes. During the decade 1960-1970, female enrollment has risen twice as fast as the enrollment of males. Women began to enter commercial schools in 1979/1. In the same year, vocational training was introduced for secondary students and was expanded in 1979.

In 1974, the Bahraini government initiated an anti-illiteracy programme, establishing teaching centres to teach reading, writing, English, vocational and homemaking skills, sewing, weaving and maternal and child care. As for higher education, women in Bahrain face no serious obstacles if they decide to pursue any specialization. In 1980/1 42.6 per cent of the total Bahraini students studying abroad were females.

A survey on the desired level of education for women indicated that 56.5 per cent of the respondents chose a Ph.D., 29.1 per cent a B.A., 12.1 per cent an M.A., 1.2 per cent suggested a limit to secondary education, and 1.2 per cent did not res-

pond.

Women in Bahrain have a very positive and self-competent response to education, and it has been observed that "education and employment of women in Bahrain are parallal achievements ... the higher the level of education, the higher the rate of employment"⁽²⁾ The rate of women's labour force participation is higher among educated women. Bahrain is making significant progress toward Bahrainization of the labour force by training Bahrainis to fill all skilled positions, providing a viable solution to the problems of employment and relieving the country from its reliance on an expatriate labour force.

Bahrain, a member state of the Gulf Cooperation Council which was founded on 4 February 1981, benefits from the Economic Agreement of the GCC. One of the major elements of the Economic Agreement recognizes the need for pooling of human resources to prevent harmful competition from scarce labour. Collectively, the GCC countries will be able to sustain a diversified economy; e.g. the current construction of a causeway between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. Oil reserves of Bahrain are not very high; this has prompted Bahrain to diversify its source of income through the manufacturing and services (finance and banking) sectors. These economic endeavours have opened new jobs and opportunities for women, and have contributed to the rapid increase in female participation in the labour force. In return, economic growth may be sustained within the framework of the integration of women in social and economic development.

Aida Arasoghli

(1) al-Khalid, F (1980) 'Dirasaton 'an al-Dur al-Tanmawi' lil Mar'a al-Khalijiyya fil Musahama fi Tanmiyat-al Mujtama' (A Study on the Development Role of the Gulf Women in Participating in the Development of Society), paper presented at the

Second Regional Conference: Women in the Peninsula and the Gulf, Kuwait, March 28-31. pp. 21-2.

(2) Khuri, Fuad I. (1980) *Tribe and State in Bahrain*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, p. 132.

The Changing Roles of Arab Women in Bahrain

*E. James Fordyce, Layla Rhadi,
Maurice D. Van Arsdol, Jr and Mary Beard Deming*

In Bahrain, emancipation of Bahraini women has been coming about in response to economic requirements. Labor force growth in Bahrain has been discussed in the following excerpt taken from a recently published book, *Bahrain and the Gulf*.*

Economic growth, coupled with substantial government expenditures on physical infrastructure and social services, created substantial educational and occupational opportunities for Bahrainis as well as employment opportunities for non-Bahrainis. Foreign labor has been described as having been used as an elastic source of labor supply, pending Bahrainization of the labor force (United Nations Fund for Population Activities 1979), a development that is facilitated by increasing Bahraini female employment. This report describes the growth of the female labor force; labor force participation rates by sex, age, and education. An important question is: To what extent can and will native Arab women eventually replace foreign labor in the Gulf? Bahrain is not a 'typical' Arab country with respect to the roles of women, but as a pioneer in economic diversification among Gulf states it may be a bellweather for changes in the role of women elsewhere in the Arabian Gulf. To understand the recent changes in the role of women in Bahrain, these labor force developments must be considered.

Table 1 describes Bahrain's labor force by sex and nationality from 1951 to 1981. Growth and diversification of Bahrain's economy between 1959 and 1981 were associated with an increase of 220 percent in Bahrain's total labor force. Mean annual rates of labor force growth increased from 3 percent in the 1959-65 period to 14.2 percent in 1971-81. Of the total labor force increase from 1959 to 1971, 34.8 percent was due to Bahrainis, 11.1 percent was due to Bahraini females and 6.7 percent was due to non-Bahraini females.

The increase in the labor force from 1959 to

1981 was due to a shift from 52 percent to 62 percent of those over 15 years of age in the labor force, to changes in age composition and to the increasing movement of Bahraini women into the labor force. Bahraini women accounted for one-fourth of the increase Bahraini labor force participation.

Although there has been some emigration of natives, the Bahraini labor force has increased faster than the total native-born population since 1971. Bahrainis born after 1950 began reaching working age about 1971 and thereafter, a time of economic expansion and employment growth. In addition the Bahraini female labor force has grown faster than that of any other sex or nationality category. Increasing 86 percent between 1965 and 1971, and an additional 560 percent the following decade, Bahraini women in the labor force constituted nearly one-fifth of all Bahrainis in the labor force in 1981 and one-twelfth of the total labor force of the country.

Unlike earlier periods, the female share of the Bahraini labor force was greater in 1981 than the female share of the non-Bahraini labor force. From 1971 to 1981, 31.1 percent of the total increase in the labor force was due to Bahrainis, 12.0 percent was due to Bahraini women and 6.7 percent was due to non-Bahraini females. Bahraini women are now important participants in their country's labor force expansion.

Although Bahraini women have the highest rates of labor force participation among all the Gulf states, and although these rates are increasing, 82.5 percent of Bahraini women did not engage in economic activity outside the home in 1981. Participation by women in the labor force is typically interrupted by childbearing and childrearing res-

possibilities around the ages of 25 to 29. Among Bahraini women, labor force participation is concentrated in ages 20 to 24, after their education is completed but before marriage or the birth of their first child.

The median age of the labor force declined dramatically between 1971 and 1981 – from 34 to 29 years of age. This was due to high foreign immigration of younger people and increasing labor force participation by young Bahraini women. In 1971 Bahrainis were slightly older (at 35 years) than non-Bahrainis (at 32). By 1981 the median labor force age had dropped to 29 for Bahrainis but only to 30 for non-Bahrainis. The age difference by nationality was especially pronounced among women: In 1981 the median age of Bahraini women workers was 23 and that of immigrant women workers was 29.

Increasing educational attainment appears to have little influence in Bahrain on men's labor force participation, which is already quite high, but it has a profound effect on that of women. Higher education provides access to more attractive jobs and increases the motivation to use the training that has been received. In addition women's involvement in the labor force is facilitated by the delayed marriage and childbearing that is characteristic of women with more education.

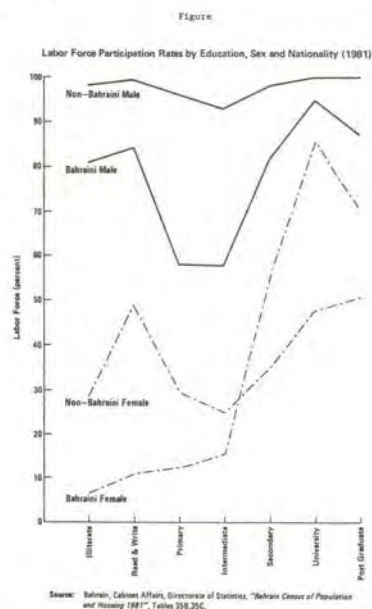
Figure 1 displays labor force participants rates by education for Bahraini and non-Bahraini men and women in 1981. Participation rates increase with higher education levels among women, especially Bahraini women. The labor force of Bahrain has grown rapidly since 1959 as a result of population growth, foreign immigration and the increasing participation of women. Even with emigration of Bahrainis, the native-born labor force grew 7 percent annually between 1971 and 1981. Increasing education has been associated with a greater participation of women in economic activity in Bahrain. High continued immigration could constrain female labor force participation if the economy does not continue to expand.

Table 1 : Labor Force by Sex and Nationality, 1959-81*

Nationality & Sex of Labor Force	1959	1965	1971	1981
Total	45,479	53,274	60,301	146,133
Male	44,126	51,251	57,052	126,808
Female	1,353	2,023	3,249	19,325
Bahraini	29,640	31,231	37,950	64,636
Male	28,683	30,236	36,102	52,460
Female	957	995	1,848	12,176
Non-Bahraini	15,839	22,043	22,351	81,497
Male	15,443	21,015	20,950	74,348
Female	396	1,028	1,401	7,149

*Data include unemployed as well as employed persons.

Sources: Bahrain, Population Census 1959, pp. 14-15; Bahrain, Finance Department, Fourth Census of Population: 1965, Table 8; Bahrain, Ministry of Finance and National Economy, Statistical Bureau, Statistics of the Population Census: 1971, Table 9; Bahrain, Cabinet Affairs, Directorate of Statistics, 'Bahrain Census of Population and Housing – 1981, Trends and Prospects,' Tables 30A, 30B, 30C.



(*) Nugent, Jeffrey B., Thomas, Theodore H. *Bahrain and the Gulf*. Croom Helm Ltd, Provident House, Burrell Row, Beckenham, Kent, 1985, pp. 56-59.

Bahraini Women and Education

Statistics about education in the Gulf region tell us that the first school for girls was opened in 1928 in the State of Bahrain. Our connection with the Gulf women, however, goes back to an earlier date, to 1956, when Beirut University College received the first three women students from Bahrain. Since then, the College has received a continuous stream of select women students coming from Bahrain, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, many of whom have won distinction as educators, directors, artists and social leaders in their respective countries.

Of the early Bahraini students at BUC, I remember Munira Fakhro who contributed to the College magazine, and her classmate, Safiyya Duaigher. Both of them did post-graduate study abroad and have been occupying responsible posts in their country. Safiyya has recently obtained a Ph.D. in administration of higher education. Munira is working at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and is also a Ph.D. candidate.

I also remember May Arrayedh, and her sister Thurayya, a gifted poet like her father Ibrahim. She wrote good, modern poetry in Arabic and English.

Among other graduates from Bahrain, I particularly remember Faiqa Zayani, Fatima Arrayedh and Myriam Doy. for their meek character and diligent work. Faiqa spent some time in Egypt for further study.

As to Fatima and Myriam, they are teaching at the Bahrain University College. Other graduates that should be mentioned are Naima Fakhro, a talented painter and illustrator and Bahja Fakhro who joined in the publication of a book on *Customs of the Arabian Gulf*.

At the Conference on "Planning for the Integration of Arab Women in Economic Development", organized by IWSAW and held in Nicosia, June 1985, I had the chance to meet Faiza al-Zayani, acting advisor of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Bahrain, and author of *Social Indicators for Bahrain 1977*. She is also an active participant in social welfare activities which constitute a characteristic trend in Bahrain. At the workshop on "Children's Literature", organized by the above Institute during August 1985, I was acquainted with two Bahraini specialists in elementary education, engaged in administration and preparation of educational programmes: Hala Sawwah and Aisha Ghalloum.

The bright aspects of the women's movement in the Gulf region should not obliterate the needs and shortcomings which they share with other Arab women: a high rate of illiteracy which they are trying hard to eradicate, feeble participation in development and lack of political rights.

But the future prospects will remain good as long as the basic conditions for evolution exist, namely: peace, unity, co-operation and awareness of the main problems that need treatment. In these respects, educated women, particularly university women who form a remarkable proportion in the Gulf countries, can be a highly efficient force.

The educated woman of the Gulf represents, according to my knowledge, the Arab woman who shows eagerness to learn and willingness to adopt the best of Western culture, but remains faithful to certain values of heritage; reserve, restraint and genuine, unsophisticated manners.

Bahrain

Location:	Bahrain is an island state situated just off the shorelines of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in the Arabian Gulf.	
Geography:	The State of Bahrain consists of thirty-three islands. It was identified as a site of the ancient civilization of Dilmun. Major cities: Manama and Muharraq.	Constitution:
Population:	373,000 in (1980). ⁽¹⁾	A new 108 - article constitution was ratified in June 1973, and states that " all citizens shall be equal before the law" and guarantees freedom of speech, of the press, of conscience and religious beliefs.
Capital:	Manama.	Currency:
Languages:	Arabic.	Production:
Religions:	Islam, divided relatively evenly between Sunni and Shiah sects in the indigenous population, the Ruling Family belonging to the Sunnis.	Equal Pay Policy:
Education:	Education is free in Bahrain. Among the higher educational establishments is a Women's Teacher Training College and the Gulf Polytechnic College which has revised and upgraded its programmes. The newly established University College for Arts, Sciences and Education has initiated the first bachelors degree programme in Bahrain. The Arab Gulf University, is under construction in Bahrain. Literacy rate is 80 per cent.	Economy:
Birth Rate:	per 1000 pop. (1976-81): 31.0	Bahrain was the focal point for a pearl diving industry until 1930, Bahrain was the first producer of oil in the Gulf region. Oil in commercial quantity was found in 1932. Bahrain has 65 Offshore Banking Units (OBU) including some of the biggest US and UK banks. Three major industries: Aluminium, ship repair and engineering and petrochemicals.
Death Rate:	per 1000 pop. (1976-81): 6.0	Welfare:
Government:	Bahrain was proclaimed fully independent on August 14th 1971. Bahrain was a British protectorate for over 100 years. On August 17th, Sheikh Issa Bin Sulman al-Khalifa took the title of Amir. In September Bahrain became a member of the United Nations and the Arab League. In December 1972, 22 members were elected to seats in the 44 - member Constituent Council.	27 kindergartens and nurseries (1984).
		GDP:
		Budget:
		\$ 2.5 Billion. Finance Ministry figures show allocations for educational sector as BD 7.2 million (\$ 18.9 million) & BD 11.6 million (\$ 30.4 million). ⁽²⁾

(1) Al-Ebraheem, Hassan, Kuwait and the Gulf. Croom Helm, London 1984. p.75.

(2) MEED, Vol, 30, No.5, 1-7 February 1986. p. 7

Lami'a Abbas Al-'Imarah



Lami'a Abbas al-'Imarah is prominent Iraqi poet whose poetry is genuine, spontaneous and open to many cultures to which she was exposed.

Between 1979 and 1980, she published six collections of poems:

1. *Azzawia-l-Khalia* (The Empty Corner), Baghdad, 1959.
2. *Aoudat-u-r-Rabi'* (Return of Spring), Baghdad, 1962.
3. *Aghani Ashtar* (Songs of Ashtar), Beirut, 1969.
4. *Iraqiyya* (Iraqi woman), Beirut, 1971.
5. *Yusammunahu-l-Hubb* (They Call It Love), Beirut, 1972.
6. *Law Anba' ani-l-Arraf* (Had the Sooth Sayer Told me), Beirut, 1980.

Recently, the student union of Qatar University organized a poetry recital for Lami'a Abbas al-'Imarah. The following is a poem that was published in *Women and the Family in the Middle East* by Elizabeth Warnock Fernea.

THE FORTUNE-TELLER

If the fortune-teller had said
That you would be my love
I would not have written love poems
For any other man
But prayed in silence
That you would be with me always.

If the fortune-teller had said
That I would touch the moon's face,
I would never have played
With the pebbles in the river
Or strung my hopes
On beads.

If the fortune-teller had said
That my love would be a prince
Riding a horse of rubies,
I would never have dreamed
Of death
For earth would have held me
With its golden ropes of light.

If the fortune-teller had said
That my love would come to me
On snowy nights, with the sun in his hands
My breath would not have frozen,
And old sorrows
Would not have welled up in my heart.

If the fortune-teller had said
That I would meet you in this wilderness
I would never have wept for anything on earth
But collected my tears
All my tears
For the day you might leave me.

(1977) ⁽¹⁾

THE PATH OF SILENCE

I warned you
Don't ask for explanations
When you walk with me,
And you agreed.
But we haven't gone far,
You said

"Didn't you kill a young man yesterday?
He was gentle, weak and loving ..."

My son
Don't dwell on it.
This, this death was a separation.
He was gentle, weak, loving
But after all, what do the dead need?

And we walked ...
I warned you
Not to curse the people of yesterday
When you walk with me,
And you cursed.

And we walked ...
Your eyes shifted back and forth
Whenever a girl passed by.
You were close to me
And far from me.
You were arrogant

And we walked ...
And we became thirsty
And we stopped to drink
I swear that I have never drunk before
The way I drank yesterday.
I was the cup
And you were the wine.

And we walked ...
And you were content.
I said, come in, Adam
Here are the trees of heaven
Strip them, bough by bough
Except the sorrow trees ...
For I fear, I fear the sorrow trees.

You bypassed the permitted boughs.
You disobeyed.

The sorrow trees darkened like clouds
Before my eyes.
And I cried.

You left, Adam, you were expelled.
Go back to wherever you came from.

BUT I ...

Across the rivers that have no bridges
Are lovers I do not know.
The thought of me excites them to rapture.
But I ...
I am only a body
Buried beneath the snow.
Beautiful and beloved
Forever.

(1978)

Note

(1) In *Law anba'ani al-'arraf* (Beirut: Al-Mu'assasah al-Arabiyyah Lil-Dirasat Wa al-Nashr, 1980).

Charlotte Bruner: "Unwinding Threads"

"Women writers in Africa have been fewer in number, have published later, and generally have received less critical attention and acclaim than their male counterparts. But women's fiction which is both emotionally compelling and artistically excellent does exist". (Preface, p. XIV). With these lines, Charlotte Bruner gives us in a nut-shell the description of the situation of the African women writers, which has indeed been far too neglected on all levels – writer, reader, critic – due to various factors and conditions exposed in the book under study. Thanks to this excellent compilation of writings by women from various parts in Africa and to her critical and analytical introductory notes for each section and each writer, Charlotte Bruner has greatly remedied a deplorable situation.

The first part of the book deals with Western Africa. The first woman novelist to be published in London in the sixties was the Nigerian Flora Nwapa, who received international recognition. An excerpt from one of her novels: *This is Lagos* (1971) gives us an idea of one of the themes Nwapa has greatly developed in her work, namely that of women in traditional rural polygamous societies. Then came the Ghanaian, Ama Ata Aidoo whose short story "The Message" reprinted here, deals with women's reactions to change, a theme much developed in her writing. Buchi Emecheta, who like Nwapa is from Nigeria, first writes about her experience as a foreign wife in England as well as women's oppression in Nigeria. "A Man Needs Many Wives" is an excerpt from one of her novels: *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979).

Although rich in important male writers, Francophone Western Africa did not produce many women writers worthy of consideration, until Mariama Ba from Senegal, received the first Noma award in 1980. "Rejection", an excerpt from her novel *Une si Longue Lettre* (So Long a Letter), translated by Moduge Bode-Thomas, describes the fate of contemporary Senegalese women who are partners in Muslim polygamous marriages. Other stories and writers in this section, are "Anticipation" by Mabel Dove Danquah from Ghana, "Mista Courifer" by Adelaide Casely-Hayford from Sierra Leone, and "New Life at Kyerefaso" by Efua Sutherland from Ghana.

The second part is on Eastern Africa, "Mwipenza the Killer" by Matha Mvungi from Tanzania, "The Winner" by Barbara Kimenye from Uganda, "Itega and Irua" from Daughter of Mumbi (1969) by Charity Waciuma from Kenya, "Cold, Cold World" from *Black Night Quiloa* by Hazel Mugot, of mixed Sri-lanka and Seychelles parentage, who grew up in Kenya, and has extensively developed the theme of cross-cultural marriage and the changes taking place in the relationships between men and women, and finally "The Rain Came" by Grace Ogot from Kenya, who is known for her sense of the macabre and her utilization of witchcraft in her work.

The third part deals with Southern Africa. This country is probably one of the most, if not the most, troubled African country politically because of its system of apartheid, but it has produced some of the most important writers, showing that

sometimes political tension serves as a catalyst for creation. Here we are presented with Miriam Tlal, a Soweto writer whose first short story was banned in South Africa, and who assumes that most others will also be banned. Her piece "Point of No Return" shows her deep commitment to the problems of the oppressed in her country. Amelia House's "Conspiracy", part of her Master's thesis at the University of Louisville, shows her special interest in "Socialization Through Literature". Bessie Head's "Snapshots of a Wedding" reflects, as does much of her work, her experience as a woman in exile rejected by males, by the white African elite and by the black Africans. The section also includes "Inkalamu's place" by Nadine Gordimer who "speaks as a rational, sometimes idealistic, ever-sensitive white South African woman who makes real for her readers all over the world the pain that only whites in this confused, unstable and very sad plight can know" (p. 119). She has written eight novels, all set in South Africa in a context of growing violence. Doris Lessing's "Traitors" reflects the author's fascination with a child's exploration and developing awareness of human inter-relationships.

Lessing was born in Iran, spent her youth in Rhodesia, then moved to England; her stories and novels draw directly upon her African background. And Olive Schreiner's "Three dreams in a desert" from *Under a Mimosas-Tree*, focuses largely on women's roles in a writing style which is heavily biblical.

Finally, the last section discusses Northern Africa, known as the Maghreb, literally, the setting sun. "My Mother, my Mother-in-Law" from *Histoire de Ma Vie* (translated by Charlotte Bruner) reveals the strong ties, the bonds of affection and hatred in a kabyle extended family. It is the autobiography of Fadhma Amrouche, who came from "a family of kabyle village folk, a family of traditional singers who recounted the proverbial wisdom and sang the lyrics and epics of their past," (p. 165). Her daughter, Marguerite Taos-Amrouche's "The Story of the Chest" from *Le Grain Magique* (also translated by Charlotte

Bruner) includes definite kabyle characteristics. An excerpt from *Les Impatients* (translated by Len Ortzen) by the Algerian Assia Djebar, deals with the routine of Algerian women's lives and their hope for change and liberation. A short story "Another Evening at the Club" (translated from the Arabic by Denys Johnson-Davies) by the Egyptian Alifa Rifaat shows the writer's concern for women's social position and subordination. Another short-story "The picture" (also translated from the Arabic by Denys Johnson-Davies) by another Egyptian, Latifa El-Zayat, also shows concern for women's plight and lack of freedom. Finally the short-story "The Long Trial" (translated from French by David Bruner) by André Chédid, a writer born in Egypt, of Lebanese origin, and who has lived in France since 1946, has gained many literary prizes as well as international recognition, and has clearly a universal voice in theme, message and style.

This compilation with introductory notes could provide an excellent textbook for a class in literature, African studies or women's studies. It can also provide an excellent reference book as well as enjoyable and enlightening reading for anyone interested in the literature or sociology of that part of the world, or in women's literature, or in literature in general. Both Charlotte Bruner and her husband David, who often work as a remarkable team (and one that draws admiration) on many of their projects, ought to be praised for their long commitment and hard work as translators, critical analysts, radio-programmers, teachers, writers and recorders of literature of African women. Thanks to them many of the voices by known and unknown women have reached a wider audience.

Evelyne Accad

* Bruner, Charlotte. *Unwinding Threads*. London: Heinemann, 1984.

“Social-Emotional Relationship of Preschool Children in Two Family Structures”

An Abstract of Master of Arts Thesis
on Social-Emotional Relation-
ship of Preschool Children in
Two Family Structures.

(Summary of English Text)

Randa Azzam Khoury

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect, if any, of the mother's employment status and role satisfaction on the child's social-emotional relationship. The Children's Self-Social Constructs Test, was used to determine the child's self concept. A second instrument, the Porter Parental Acceptance Scale, was used to determine the attitude of the mothers towards their children, and whether this was affected by her employment status and role satisfaction. An Information Sheet was also given to each mother to determine her employment status and role satisfaction.

A stratified population of 170, three-four year old children and their mothers, all living in West Beirut, served as the subjects for this research. Eighty-six were identified as nonworking and 84 as working. From the Mother's Information Sheet, 103 mothers reported role satisfaction and 67 expressed role dissatisfaction.

The results showed to significant differences at the .05 level between the maternal employment status and maternal role satisfaction, (1) in the attitude of mothers towards their children regarding authoritarian (Hypothesis I and II) and acceptance (Hypothesis, III and IV), and (2) in the Children's Self-Concept subscales of dependency, esteem, realism, identification with teacher and friends (Hypothesis V and VI). However, significant differences were found on the subscales of identification with father and mother and in the forced choice subscale of father, mother, teacher and friends (Hypothesis V and VI).

Summary

The results of this research, conducted on 170, three-four year old children, showed evidence to suggest that mother's employment is not significantly associated with specified aspects of the subject's social-emotional relationships. However, significant differences were noted in certain aspects of the children's social-emotional relationships when their mothers were grouped either in terms of role satisfaction or by employment status.

The six hypotheses examined in this study were concerned with the relationship of employment status and role satisfaction of the mothers, with respect to:

- a) Maternal attitude towards their children
- b) Self-concept of children from the two family structures.

The Porter Parental Scale was used to measure the acceptance or authoritarian attitude of mothers towards their children. Statistical analysis of the results revealed that authoritarian and acceptance scores for satisfied mothers, regardless of employment status, produced values which allowed us not to reject hypothesis I (Authoritarian) and hypothesis III (Acceptance). Moreover no significant interaction between satisfaction and employment was detected for the authoritarian attitude (Hypothesis II) or acceptance attitude (Hypothesis IV).

Chi-Square analysis for the dependency, esteem, and realism factors gave results which indicated no significant differences among children who came

from families with role satisfied or role dissatisfied mothers (Hypothesis V), or among children who came from families with employed or unemployed mothers (Hypothesis VI).

Identification with and forced choice between special individuals (father, mother, teacher and friends), yielded differing results. The Identification with Father Subscale was significantly different among children of unemployed mothers regardless of the later's role satisfaction. Data regarding the same Identification with Father Subscale, but with employment status as the subpopulation determinant, revealed (1) no significant differences among the scores of children of employed mothers regardless of role satisfaction, and (2) significant differences among the scores of children of unemployed mothers on the basis of role satisfaction.

Analysis of the Identification with Mother Subscale for each of the satisfied and unsatisfied mother subpopulations revealed no significant differences on the basis of employment status.

The subpopulations were then reconstituted for employment status. Significant differences were identified (1) for employed mothers on the basis of role satisfaction, and (2) also for unemployed mothers on the basis of role satisfaction. No significant differences were detected in either the Identification with Teacher and Identification with Friends data.

When making choices on the Forced Choice Father Subscale; children of the subpopulation of satisfied mothers, chose their fathers significantly different on the basis of mothers employment status. Children of the subpopulation of unsatisfied mothers did not significantly differ with their responses on the basis of mothers employment status.

Reconstituting the subpopulation into employed mothers and unemployed mothers revealed the fol-

lowing results for the Forced Father Subscale. Children of employed mothers did significantly differ in their responses on the basis of role satisfaction. There was no significant difference however, between the response patterns of children of unemployed mothers on the basis of role satisfaction.

The data regarding the Subscale Forced Choice Mother revealed (1) for the subpopulation of satisfied mothers, no significant differences on the basis of employment status; (2) for the subpopulation of unsatisfied mothers, no significant differences on the basis of employment status; (3) for the subpopulation of employed mothers, significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction; and (4) for the subpopulation of unemployed mothers, significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction was also reported.

Analysis of the Forced Choice Teacher Subscale revealed (1) for the subpopulation of satisfied mothers, no significant differences on the basis of employment status; (2) children of the subpopulation of unsatisfied mothers chose their teachers significantly different on the basis of mother's employment status; (3) for the subpopulation of employed mothers no significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction was reported; and (4) for the subpopulation of unemployed mothers no significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction was reported.

The data regarding the Subscale Forced Choice Friends revealed (1) for the subpopulation of satisfied mothers significant differences on the basis of employment status; (2) for the subpopulation of unsatisfied mothers, significant differences on the basis of employment status; (3) for the subpopulation of employed mothers, significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction; and (4) for the subpopulation of unemployed mothers, no significant differences on the basis of role satisfaction.

Hanan Al-Shaykh



The Story of Zahra by Hanan al-Shaykh, has recently been published in English.* In the following article which appeared in the Middle East May 1986, she spoke to Editor Sarah Graham-Brown about her book and her views of the status of Arab women today.

Writing novels gives Hanan al-Shaykh a feeling of security. "It's reassuring. Each day you enter a world and see where it leads you, even if it leads you into nightmares."

Hanan's quiet manner belies the dark world of her novels and short stories, which explore with bold candour some of the most controversial social issues in the Middle East today.

She comes from a southern Lebanese family and wrote her first novel, *Suicide of a Dead Man*, while she was a student in Cairo. Her third novel, *The Story of Zahra*, has just appeared in English translation.

When she and her husband came to London in 1976 after living through a year of civil war in Beirut, she had no plans to write a novel. But one day, she says, "The first sentence in the book came to me."

Later she met an acquaintance who asked her what she was doing. "I lied," she recalls. "I said I was writing a novel and would finish it by such-and-such a date. Afterwards I went to my husband's office, shut myself in a room and started writing."

Later her husband's business took him to Saudi Arabia, where she lived for several years, using the

experience as the basis for a novel which is soon to be published in Beirut.

The principal character in *The Story of Zahra* is a young Lebanese woman, a southerner like Hanan, whose experiences as a child and an adolescent growing up in Beirut leave her emotionally scarred.

She resists social pressures to accept the conventional roles of daughter and wife by withdrawing in to silence and passivity.

Her family, and the man to whom she is briefly married, regard her with a mixture of anger and bewilderment. She is emotionally disturbed and confused by witnessing, as a child, her mother's clandestine love affair. Later she experiences as loveless but obsessive affair of her own with a married man.

She tries to escape by going to visit her uncle, who is living in exile in West Africa in a Lebanese community which, as Hanan puts it, is "cut off with its fading memories."

But her uncle's unwelcome physical attentions drive her to accept marriage to a man with whom she finds herself unable to communicate. Her feelings of isolation become intense, and she retreats into almost catatonic passivity.

"By now I liked waiting," relates Zahra. "I would have been happy to wait on my own for ever. The rain streamed down and the heat saturated my head as I wondered, "Why is it that I am always finding myself in a hurtful situation? Even doing no more than lying in bed back in Beirut,

* Published by Quartet, London: April 1986, £ .8.95.

there would always be something that troubled me. Is a person born with this uneasiness, even as a person might be born with eyes of a certain shape, hair of a certain colour? Ever since I can remember I have felt uneasy, I have never felt anything else."

Hanan says the character of Zahra is a combination of two women she knew, though the chapter on Zahra's childhood contains some autobiographical elements. Zahra's only moments of unguarded pleasure seem to be those she spends in the southern Lebanese village with her grandfather.

According to Hanan, "There are many Zahras in the Arab world." Perhaps they do not live lives of such unrelieved bleakness, but like Zahra are trapped by society's demand that they conform to certain roles as daughters, wives and mothers. These are norms, which, Hanan implies, are often breached, but in secret, bringing guilt and trauma in their wake.

Zahra resists these demands by her obstinate silence and passivity. But this cuts her off from family, neighbours and friends. Because she does not behave like others, she is labelled strange, or crazy.

"People are interested in your life as long as you conform. If not, it's easy to become isolated," Hanan says. She does not portray the other characters in the book as evil or malicious. Locked into their own views of the world, they oppress Zahra through a lack of understanding.

Zahra's exiled uncle, for example, imposes an unwelcome physical affection which stems from his loneliness and longing for his family. Her husband, eager to better himself socially and economically, is furious when he discovers that Zahra is not a virgin and bewildered by her refusal to play the role expected of her as a wife.

Zahra's mother, despite her own clandestine love affair, cannot understand Zahra's sexual and emotional problems, while her father is portrayed as rigid and unimaginative in his relationship with both women.

Zahra's brother Ahmad is kind to her, but lives in a world of his own. Once the civil war breaks out, he joins a militia. At first he is idealistic but gradually the power of wielding a gun and fighting goes to his head, and his main interest becomes the

loot he can accumulate.

But, for Zahra, the civil war and the trauma of her society offer her the freedom to emerge from her protective shell. Social taboos break down. She goes with her family to their village in the south, but cannot bear to be away from Beirut and returns to live in the family home alone – something unthinkable before the war.

Watching the war from her apartment, she gradually becomes obsessed with the sniper said to be operating from a nearby rooftop – hooded, all-seeing, an emblem of death.

Hanan says she found herself fascinated by the idea of the sniper while living in Beirut during the first year of the war. How could an ordinary man become such a symbol of power and destruction?

Zahra is fascinated and afraid. She finally encounters the man she believes is the sniper and begins an affair with him, in a series of dreamlike meetings each afternoon on the rooftop from which she suspects he picks people off in the street below.

Gradually, she begins to see him not as a killer but as an ordinary human being. When she becomes pregnant, he offers to marry her. This creates a vision of happiness and normality amid the aberrations of war.

But as she returns home from a meeting with her lover, she collapses in the street in great pain, probably caused by a miscarriage. Her last thought before losing consciousness is that "her sniper" has shot her.

The outspokenness of *The Story of Zahra* in dealing with sexual and personal issues has caused the book to be banned in a number of Arab countries. But in Lebanon, Hanan says, it was well received by the critics, because, she thinks, it tries to portray people's lives outside the framework of sectarian politics.

Although the audience for novels in Lebanon is small, she found that readers identified with the story, partly because it is written in southern dialect, which gave it a flavour of authenticity, and "because it's about things that do happen."

Through the tormented character of Zahra, Hanan al-Shaykh's book makes her readers more aware of the destructive effects of social pressures on women's lives.

Bibliography

BOOKS

Said, Laila. *A Bridge Through Time: A memoir*. Summit Press, 1985. 282 pages.

Tucker, Judith E. *Women in Nineteenth-Century Egypt*. Cambridge University Press, London 1986. 251 pages.

Al-Misnad, Sheikha. *The Development of Modern Education in the Gulf*. Ithaca Press, London 1986, 386 pages.

Al-Shaykh, Hanan. *The Story of Zahra*. Quartet Press, London 1986, (English translation).

Marsot, Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid. *A Short History of Modern Egypt*. Cambridge University Press, London 1986. 151 pages.

Al-Saadawy, Nawal. *Hanan Qalil*. (Little Passion). Dar al-Adab, Beirut 1986. 127 pages.

Nuwaihed, Nadia al-Jurdi. *Nis'aa Min Biladi*, (Women from my Country). Al Mu'assasah al-Arabiah lil Dirasah wa an-Nashr, Beirut 1986.

ARTICLES

Emirate News – Abu Dahbi. “FAO Proposes Help to Rural Women Produce More Food”. February 3, 1986. p. 2.

Arab News - Saudi Arabia. “Banking, Investment and Insurance”. September 2, 1986, p. 9.

Pugh, Deborah. “A Question of Trust”. *The Middle East*, March, 1986. pp 31-32.

THESIS

Khoury, Randa Azzam. “Social-Emotional Relationship of Preschool Children in Two Family Structures”. American University of Beirut, 1986. 87 pages.

BOOK REVIEW

Abdo, Samir. *Al-Manzela al-Jinsiah Lil Mara'a Al-Arabiah*. (The Sexual Status of Arab Women). An-Nahar, July 3, 1986. p. 11. (Amira Hijjo).

Gulf Aid for Africa

In this report, Karl Lavrencic and Susannah Tarbush report on AGFUNDS project in Binga.

A project financed by the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (Agfund) is having a dramatic impact on the life of rural women in Binga, one of Zimbabwe's most disadvantaged districts. According to J T Matarise, the government's district administrator, the project means that "life in Binga may never be the same again".

The Rural Development Demonstration Project for Women, which is administered by the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is in its second year, teaching groups of women improved farming methods. One aim is to increase food production: more than half the children in Binga — an isolated area on the eastern shore of Lake Kariba — are under-nourished and hence vulnerable to disease.

Working under the guidance of agricultural extension agents, women plant seeds of the region's staple crops — groundnuts, millet and sorghum. Fourteen shallow wells have been sunk to irrigate small family gardens, and women are learning how to improve crop storage facilities in order to avoid post-harvest losses which have accounted for wastage of up to 20 per cent. A training centre for women farmers is also about to open.

"We have chosen Binga as a guinea-pig," says a senior official in the Zimbabwe ministry of community development and women's affairs. "If life can be improved in Binga by the methods we are using, progress will be easier elsewhere in similarly-underprivileged regions." Two-thirds of Zimbabwe's eight million people eke out a precarious living in such regions.

Binga district is inhabited by 100,000 people of the Tonga group who were resettled there from a fertile valley in what is now the Kariba Lake, flooded when the Kariba Dam was built just over 30 years ago.

In their efforts to cope with an arid and inhospitable new environment, the Tongas have relied heavily on outside assistance. Since independence in 1980, much has been done to improve health services and schools, but 90 per cent of the population are still illiterate.

Although women carry out 90 per cent of all farm work, little had been done to draw them into community development. The Agfund FAO project aims to make them active participants.

Agfund gave \$500,000 for the project, with the Zimbabwe government providing the equivalent of \$625,000 — under Agfund rules, other sources must provide more than half the cost of projects.

The Middle East, February 1986.

WOMEN AND THE ARAB SOCIETY

Old Boundaries, New Frontiers

The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies (CCAS), Georgetown University, held its eleventh annual symposium April 10-11, 1986 to explore the question of women and Arab Society.

What role has the Arab woman played in her society? How has she been viewed and treated by the relatives, religious authorities, and state officials who hold power over her? How has she participated in the making of Arab history? What sorts of contributions will she be able to make to economic development and social political progress in the future?

The stereotype of the veiled and secluded Arab woman is belied by the enormous complexity of the situation of women in the past and present Arab world. Women have been the victims of discrimination and severe constraints, but their lives have also encompassed meaningful social relationships, violent political struggles, and broad economic activities. This symposium will explore the impact of the modern state on women as well as the ways in which women have been politically active on their own behalf. It will analyze the different interpretations of Islamic views of women and discuss women's own contributions to the cultural life of the region. The central problem of relations between the genders, and the ways in which these relations affect all aspects of social, economic, and political development, will serve as a major theme for the discussion of women's, and men's, past, present, and future in the Arab world.

The Center for Contemporary Arab Studies eleventh annual symposium brought together members of the academic, diplomatic, business, and governmental communities with a select group of distinguished specialists, including many from Arab countries and Europe, who explored the question of women and Arab society. Panelists included Evelyne Accad, Leila Ahmed, Abdel-Khaleq Abd-Alhay, Margot Badran, Halim Barakat, Elizabeth Fernea, Sondra Hale, Mervat Hatem, Suad Joseph, Lubna al-Kazi, Afaf Mahfouz, Margaret L. Meriwether, Fatima Mernissi, Safia Mohsen, Julie Peteet, Amal Rassam, Rosemary Sayigh, Susan Schaefer Davis, Munira Sharrad, Barbara Stowasser, Judith Tucker, Caroline Williams, and Malak Zaalouk.

AL-RAIDA, IWSAW QUARTERLY

LEBANON

P.O.Box 13-5053
Beirut University College
Beirut, Lebanon
Cable Address: BECOGE
Tlx: BUC 23389 LE

U.S.A.

Beirut University College
475 Riverside Drive,
Room 1846
New York, NY 10115

Director: Julinda Abu Nasr
Advisor: Rose Ghurayyib
Editor: Aida Arasoghli

YEARLY CONTRIBUTION

Lebanon: L.L. 100 per year
Other Countries: \$ 15 per year
plus \$3 to cover postage