



THE 'MOTHER', THEY NEVER HAD...

How many times those piercing eyes have questioned their credibility? And how many times, these women on her toes 24x7 have been belittled for their efforts just for being a 'housewife'?

So, is the situation better off for working mothers?

Not really! They bore the brunt of unrealistic expectation -- both indoor and outdoor. Along with an avalanche of criticism, they are seen as 'suspicious' in their role of a wife and mother!

Working mothers versus homemakers – there is no stopping this debate in view of the rapidly disintegrating social and familial structure. There is nothing good or bad associated with the status of mothers – whether they are working or not. They should not be judged with a preconceived notion existent in our society, where every Tom, Dick and Harry labels them according to their own whims and desires.

However, before jumping to any sensible conclusion, we need to understand the subject in its true sense.

It is not suitable to argue whether women should go to work or not. And the problem doesn't lie in do's and don'ts – it comes when we transgress the realm of one role for another. It comes when women abandon their primary defined role - of mother and wife - for material pursuits, unconventional lifestyle and financial independence; these words might sound appealing to ears, but behind its dazzling smokescreen, lie some very hard-hitting, disturbing facts...

The repercussions are out there for us to see, and to learn from. The breakdown of families, rebellious children, unhappiness and dissatisfaction have set the trend.

In earlier times, women were not confused about their role, whether working or non-working. She was aware of the fact that their primary role is taking care of her family, her husband and nurturing of her children. Thanks to the Industrial Revolution, this perception underwent a sea change post-World War I, when this profit-laden capitalist regime drove women out of their homes, enslaved them intellectually with the likes of freedom, and pushed them into the workforce to generate production.

Now, women are out to benefit the State. The State is running high on GDP, women are making money like never before, dual-income have raised the standards of living to an all-time high, and the essence of motherhood is absolutely out of the picture.

There is an old adage: If you educate a woman, you educate a whole generation... So, now women are highly educated, qualified and liberated too, they should have raised a whole enlightened generation... But the reality betrays it. The youth today have a very different story to tell entangled in the web of identity crisis, loneliness, confusion, drugs, illicit relationships, depression, suicide, behavioral problems, crime, theft etc.

So, what went wrong?

There is a very beautiful quote, once said by a Sahaba (companion of Prophet Mohammad SAW), when they were on an expedition to spread the message of Islam, *"I have come to free you from the servitude of the slave and bring you to the servitude of the Lord of the slave."*

And here lies the crux the problem: this remark is a stark reminder of the situation of women today wherein they have allowed the servants like themselves to define their worth – their successes and failures. They have petty men sitting above them, governing them as their Lord. They have allowed these men to control them – their emotions, their body, their thoughts, their psychology, their need, their desire *et al*.

Since when have these filthy men, who run the state today, become our standard? Since when have they started defining policy for us? Since when have these lame ducks started making laws for us? Since when has femininity become inferior for us? Since when has becoming a full-time mother started degrading us?

Allah Almighty has given special privilege to woman to be a mother... why is such a thing not a source of pride for us anymore?

جاء رجل إلى رسول الله ﷺ فقال: يا رسول الله من أحق الناس بحسن صحابتي؟ قال: «أمك» قال: ثم من؟ قال: «أمك» قال: ثم من؟ قال: «أمك» قال: ثم من؟ قال: «أمك» قال: ثم من؟ قال: «أبوك» (متفق عليه).

The matter of the fact is we have forgotten what Allah (swt) has given is better for us. Society asked us to leave our homes, leave our children, to sit in an office and become a money-minting machine. And we women, without any regret whatsoever, embraced it for us. We accepted the lure of the society – financial independence above and higher than raising our children, through which the human race survives.

Strange children, broken homes, emptiness on a personal and emotional front. The poverty of their souls has various facets -- and the most important is upbringing of children, through which the human race survives.

The parents today complain of neglect during the old days, do they not remember how they have manipulated the very natural craving of a child during his/her initial years i.e. attention. How when they were out making money, he/she fought loneliness...

We need to rethink – who defines our basic roles and responsibilities, the one who created us, or the trend some insensitive chaps have set to fulfill their material greed?

Remember, it is Allah, who has honored us in our own distinctiveness of being a mother, the most supreme.

«أفما ترضى إحدانك أنها إذا كانت حاملاً من زوجها وهو عنها راض أن لها مثل أجر الصائم القائم في سبيل الله، فإذا أصابها الطلق لم يعلم أهل السماء وأهل الأرض ما أخفي لها من قرة أعين، فإذا وضعت لم يخرج منها جرعة من لبنها، ولم يمص مصة، إلا كان لها بكل جرعة ويكل مصة حسنة، فإن أسهرها ليلة كان لها مثل أجر سبعين رقبة تعتقهن في سبيل الله»

“Does it not please any of you that if she is pregnant by her husband and he is satisfied with her that she receives the reward of one who fasts and prays for the sake of Allah? And when the labor pains come none in heaven or earth knows what is concealed

in her womb to soothe her. And when she delivers, not a mouthful of milk flows from her and not an instance of child's suck that she receives for every mouthful and for every suck, the reward of one good deed. And if she is kept awake by the child at night, she receives the reward of one who frees 70 slaves for the sake of Allah.” [Tabarani]

According to Islam, the primary role of the woman is of a mother and homemaker because it is through this action that generations are raised...

“Mothers play a great role in building a generation. The better a mother is at raising her children, the more successfully the Ummah is built and the more successful it is at producing heroes. You hardly ever see a great man except that a great woman is behind him who left some of her traits in his personality by way of the milk from which he was fed and the warm embrace in which he sought refuge.” Sheikh Abdullah Azzam (*Rahimahullah*).

And it is very important for women today to link their actions to the Shariah laws to save themselves from the fitna outside. We should not raise our children just because it is the laid down norm of the society, this is what women have been doing for centuries, but rather to know that it is the responsibility Allah (swt) has bestowed us with, for which we are accountable, and for our small gestures, we would be rewarded by Allah (swt). And this is an *ibadah* (act of worship) for us.

Not only the Muslims, even the non-Muslims understand the importance of women staying at home and nurturing her children. A former US congressman stated that since God gave women the ability to have babies, they shouldn't be expected to leave them to work. Who will then stay home to care for these babies?

Samuel Smiles, a pioneer in Renaissance thinking, said when governments sought to employ women, despite their contribution to the nation's wealth, it resulted in traumatic consequences as the entrance and dependence on women in the workforce increased. Attacking the structure of the domestic life, depriving children of their mothers, husbands of their wives, and children of their relatives, it robbed women of their right and duty to their families.

Economic philosopher, Jules Simon, stated in the *Journal of Magazines* v. 17, women have been introduced into different fields from sewing mills to banking institutions yet many of these women were far superior to their employers only to gain a few pounds. The husband now had the materialistic benefit of having a wage-earning wife; while simultaneously threatening to take his place in the workforce. Secondly, he noted that employers have stripped women of their homes and families.

Dr. Ida Ellen claimed in her research findings there is a high correlation between the number of working women and the high rate of crime in that society. She concluded that the root of the family crisis in America and the high level of crimes in the community are due to the wife leaving her home to double the family income. As the income level rose as did the level of morality decreased. Dr. Ellen called for the return of the wife to her home to rectify the society and its ethics being the only way to save the new generation of degradation.

Lord Byron, an English poet, claimed that women should tend to their homes and teach religion to their children while cautioning against the free mixing of men and women.

The source of guidance for us should always be the Quran and Sunnah, and not what the society says. Let's stand up, take the plunge, raise a generation of Islamic personalities, and educate our children to love Allah (swt), to follow His Book before it's too late. The choice is ours only, whether we want the glitz of this temporary world, or eternal heaven under our feet.

**Written for the Central Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir by
Nilofar Shamsi**