JOINT AND NUCLEAR FAMILY SYSTEMS: AN ANALYSIS IN THE LIGHT OF ISLAMIC TRADITIONS

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ABSTRACT

This research article analyzes and dissects the family systems, in an Islamic perspective, and how relevant it is to keep in mind various family practices in order to strengthen bonds. To answer this question, the multiple forms of family systems are discussed, compared, and evaluated to determine how they act in an Islamic context. The joint and nuclear family systems are the two main types as the focus of this study is to shed light on the role of Islam has to influence these systems and the various relationships that come with it as well. The results showed that the concept of an extended family is slowly deteriorating these days and more and more families only consist of parents and children and tend to exclude the grandparents. Results also showed that implementations of both family systems had differing effects on children, in the context of their social and cognitive development. From an outside perspective, it would be beneficial to highlight that the context of the relationships matters and both nuclear family

system and joint family system have their pros and cons and it is only how they are implemented, according to Islamic principles, can success of either be gauged.

INTRODUCTION

Definition and Meaning of Family

Muslim families might have religion in common but differences do exist in the context of cultures and heritages, which is why family professionals are advised to study the individuality of families in depth to be more sensitive to their case (Berg, I. K., 1993). A family is meant to provide a couple and their children with a stable relationship, alongside bonding them emotionally such that they provide support to each other (Nidhi Mathur, R. V., 2017). One of the most prominent features in a Muslim society is the importance given to the family and how it is regarded as the cornerstone of a balanced society (Sangeeta Dhami, A. S., 2000).

The most basic definition of a family is described as above, but in reality, there is a variety of family types ranging from the immediate family to the nuclear one. It is important to understand, in the context of Islam, the importance of a family and what it does to strengthen human bonds. The first type of family system that Islam has emphasized on is the immediate family, which specifically concerns the near relatives and the following verse refers to the moral obligations of believers to their near relatives: "Serve God and join not any partners with Him; and do good (ihsān) to parents, kinsfolk (dhī 'l-qurbā), orphans, those in need, neighbors who are near, neighbors who are strangers, the companion by your side, the wayfarer (you meet), and what your right hands possess: for God does not love the arrogant, the vainglorious" (Al-Nisā 4:36.). Due to modernization and globalization, the place and role of the near family has been adversely affected, but this impact is not uniform as there are some Muslim societies still that display a visual social-cultural role of the near relatives in the family institution. There is a significance that Islam gives to lineage in Muslim societies and it is known as the family Silsilah. This idea of lineage is very closely associated with the socio-cultural identities of clans and tribes and the tradition of recording lineage is still being observed among many Muslims.

Now, if we circle back to the definition of a household family, the main idea is that all members of the "family" live under the same roof. A popular English dictionary refers to the family unit living under the same roof as a sort of commune, which is a small community whose members share common interests, work and income and often own property collectively. If we look at families in the perspective of communes, then we can categorize it into two types. The first type would be where the elder parents live in the same house as the families of their adult children and this would entail them to share their means of livelihood and income as well. The elder parents act as the spiritual and moral leaders of the household, when they are alive and in the case of their deaths, the eldest son usually assumes the leadership role.

In short, this family system is the extended family living in the same household, comprising of the closest blood relatives, such that its attributes are highly in line with the Islamic philosophy. This of family system is slowly dying out and would be quite hard to observe in most Muslim societies of today. The second type of family system would be the nuclear family system. This simply includes parents and their children. This type of family system is emerging rapidly all over the world.

In the context of this article, it was important to highlight the different types of family. The purpose of this article, though, is to discuss the household comprising all of the people living in the same house. The type of family bonded by blood further has sub-types as well. The nuclear family would consist of the parents and the children and if the grandparents, both maternal and paternal, were to be involved as well then it would be known as an extended family. There are certain other types of family too that are on the rise, such as the single-parent family which can be attributed to divorces and broken marriages. Apart from this, multiple other issues can be brought up regarding families in Muslim societies such as whether or not the parents are legally married according to Islamic law. Other issues that pertain to Islamic laws would be the biological status of the relationship between the parent and the child, which could have effects on the marriage, rights of inheritance, parents or to the children that they upbring which could then open up other issues which could be of concern to Islamic law.

The concept of an extended family is also becoming outdated as more and more grandparents are living away from their grandchildren, which as a result weakens the social cohesions between families as there is only so much that exchanges of social visits can do to maintain the family bonds. As this conventional status disappears, the good family values associated with it corrode. Unfortunately, unless it is ready to accept its obliteration from the social scene totally, modern society has yet to invent a new important role mechanism to promote family closeness to replace the traditional function of grandparents. The Quran, on the other hand, tries to create a social framework in which grandparents – as parents of the husband and wife or the father and mother who are the family's leaders – may still have a role in protecting and improving family values and the family institution as they get older (Bakar, Osman., 2011).

One of the most important charity activities in Islam is to treat parents and relatives with compassion and respect. Grandparents, by virtue of being parents to them, would benefit from the parents of the family if they were heeded. The ability of grandparents to care for and serve their elderly can only enhance the family institution and society. Only through seeing familial relationships in their practical forms, as displayed in a family's daily existence, can one properly appreciate their wisdom and qualities. The Qur'an lays out a great method for resolving family conflicts without a lot of fuss or mudslinging, or resorting to legal gimmicks (Bakar, Osman., 2011).

The family Institution: Its Historical Origin and Developments

The traditional family is the result of heavenly intervention and human effort. It has been perpetuated over the millennia by a series of supernatural revelations, one of which is the divine law. All divinely revealed rules have as one of their higher goals the preservation of the traditional family. The deterioration and corruption of a civilization's family has played a significant role in that civilization's demise. When Adam's elder son, Cain, murdered his younger sibling Abel, the first human family experienced the first big crisis in familial relations in history. Modern man has a fundamentally different perspective on his origins and identity than old religious beliefs. Theories on the origins of the human family are mostly based on present scientific ideas. They appeal to human life's physical and cultural evolutions rather than heavenly roles. Modern theories, in the opinion of many people in the modern world, have devalued the traditional family institution (Bakar, Osman. 2011).

Importance of Family

Family is important for many reasons. First and foremost, it is the primary source of affection for a person and this also means it has a direct impact on a person's mental health. Furthermore, it serves as a support system in times of need, be it financially or psychologically. It also allows people to learn, grow and understand how to function in a society (Nidhi Mathur, Rajshree Vaishnav., 2017).

Extended and Nuclear Family System

Nuclear Family and Joint Family

A normal nuclear family contains a couple and their children. The number of dependents living under one roof under a joint family setup is substantially higher. In comparison to a nuclear family, a joint family is more affectionate and united (Nidhi Mathur, Rajshree Vaishnav., 2017). The joint family system is the conventional family system in South Asia. In rural locations, joint family arrangement is more common than in metropolitan ones. According to Mason and Bongaarts, urbanization may lead to the nucleation of family networks and a reduction in senior care and assistance (Ather M Taqui, et al., 2007).

Muslim Families: Nuclear or Extended?

Respect and regard increase as age increases within the Muslim culture. This also means that the elderly parents are highly respected due to their hierarchical position and age. Furthermore, caring for one's parents in their old age is regarded highly as it is considered a gift from Allah. However, many second-generation Muslim immigrants grew up in single-parent households. Despite Islamic teachings that urge marriage at a young age, there is a secular trend among Muslims to marry later. Some people believe that the advantages of living in a nuclear family structure in terms of individual freedom much outweigh the advantages of living in an extended family (Sangeeta Dhami, Aziz

Sheikh., 2000.). Moreover, when compared to children from nuclear families, children from joint family systems had higher cognitive and social adjustment. Traditional joint family systems are giving way to nuclear family systems, resulting in feelings of isolation among family members, particularly youngsters. Parents, teachers, administrators, and community members all have a role to play in providing quality time and encouraging healthy discussion (Vaishnav, et al., 2017).

Implications for Practice

Research casts doubt on ethnocentric and Western notions of family. Most Muslim couples, like most other couples in the general population, struggle with difficulties of division of work. Like many other ethnic national and international groupings, Muslim households hold their parents and extended family members in high regard. Knowledge and awareness, rather than differences, should be the focus of cultural competency for family therapists. The majority of participants claimed to come from middle- and upper-class families in their home countries. Two Muslim Americans who were now employed in the commercial and physical labor fields were converted.

The importance of the family and extended family in the lives of Muslims should be remembered by therapists. In the United States, Muslim households must deal with the dominance of Judeo-Christian traditions and beliefs. For individuals who come from nations where Islam is the official religion, this might be a challenging transition. Therapists should consider including extended family members in their sessions. When the presenting problem is a child, they should be cautious about going into couple or marital troubles. Muslim women may not be at ease with or interested in the kind of gender equity that westernized therapists are accustomed with and promote. Individual time with members of the marriage may be beneficial for Western therapists in order to better understand them and to allow women to express their worries. If there is any type of violence in their homes, Muslim women may be particularly vulnerable. Muslim women may rely on their husbands financially and/or on their husbands' sponsors to keep their status as immigrants or international visitors in the United States (Carolan, M.T., Bagherinia, G., Juhari, R. et al., 2000). Western therapists face a difficult task in navigating religious and cultural divides without becoming ethnocentric or Christocentric (Paulette Moore Hines, Nydia Garcia-Preto, & et al., 1992.).

The Islamic View

The Family as a Religious Institution

In accordance with the idea of al-Tawhīd (unity), which is Islam's primary doctrine, the family is a multi-dimensional institution that is also a unitary and holistic one. The divine role in the institution of marriage and family is clearly stated in the Quran. The text encourages us as humans to honor the female wombs that gave us life. This is especially important considering the common practice of performing abortions without consent. The Quran also mentions the formation of males and females with natures that are favorable to the cultivation

of inner serenity and love in another verse. Islam gives a wealth of teachings and guidance for newlywed couples to learn about these duties and how to effectively carry them out when the time comes. Marriage is regarded as sacred by religion since it is a multi-faceted connection that the married couple accepts and realizes in the name of God.

When the Prophet Muhammad famously said, "Marriage is half of religion" (Al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, Hadith No. 992), he was emphasizing the importance of marriage in religious and spiritual life. Extended familial relationships could assist enhance the family's place and purpose as both a religious and social institution from an Islamic view point. In Islam, the family's purpose is to establish a human environment suitable to spiritual and moral education for self-improvement and societal accomplishment on both an individual and collective level. In Islam, the family is also viewed as a divine instrument, one that exists to assist each of its members in achieving the dual goals of their life.

The Family as a Socio-Economic Institution

The Quran's command to believers to protect their families from hellfire, as mentioned before, signifies that it is the parents' responsibility to guarantee that religious health prevails in family life. Parents must have the required (fard al-'ayn) knowledge in order to carry out their religious responsibilities. Economic science is known as 'ilm tadbīr al-manzil (science of household government) in traditional Islamic theology. The family plays a vital social role in helping society achieve economic health. The Quran contains significant rules and directions for families to follow in order to live a healthy lifestyle and conduct their economic operations in a way that ensures their financial security. Waste, wasteful spending, and hoarding of vital products should all be avoided by the household in its consumption and economic activity. If every household practices this type of home economic ethics, the community as a whole will undoubtedly be in better financial shape.

Gender Safety Issues and Segregation

The fact that their head covering and body coverings were designed to protect them thrilled the women. They were aware that this made them more vulnerable to biased or racist behavior, yet they still felt safer than the women they saw around them. Moreover, men were necessary partners in child rearing and household activities, but they generally bore the brunt of the burden. In the case of extremely young children, women had a greater share of the duty. Men were supposed to provide religious and spiritual direction to children as they grew older, and to become more involved once they entered school. The "outside" job is for men in Muslim culture, whereas the "inside" work is for women. Women are more responsible for their homes and children. If they have the time, men will occasionally assist. Work is sometimes split between both partners in a marriage (Carolan, M.T., Bagherinia, G., Juhari, R. et al., 2000).

Muslim women are frequently seen in the West as inferior beings in desperate need of liberty. Segregation of the sexes is considered as evidence of Muslim women's oppression (Goodwin, Jan., 1994). There is much that may be done to

better women's status in Muslim society, but portrayals in Western media leave a lot to be desired. While feminism is not without flaws, attempts to impose a Western set of standards and values on Muslim women is not right. In Islam, the line between lawful and illegitimate human connections is firmly drawn. As a result, segregation exists solely to reduce the likelihood of unlawful partnerships arising (Mandaville, Peter., 2001). When organizing health education campaigns, research interviews, and other similar endeavors, gender segregation should be taken into account. If an interpreter is required, using same-sex interpreters provides a significant advantage. Unemployment can have a significant impact on a family's integrity, leaving the guy in a position limbo (Dhami, Sangeeta., 2000).

Marriage

Children have the right to be conceived and raised in a stable and secure environment, according to Islam, and marriage is regarded as providing such an environment. Celibacy and sex outside of marriage, on the other hand, are heavily condemned as behavioral extremes that are not conducive to a healthy society (al-Qaradawi, Dr. Yusuf. 1960). Some parents appear to be gaining an understanding of their children's marriage problems. Young and elderly alike, however, continue to value the practice of selecting marriage partners from one's own community (Dhami, Sangeeta., 2000).

Practical Life

Islamic law and practice, as stipulated in the Quran, guided men and women's relationships. Women and men have traditionally been prohibited from dating or mixing. The attributes of the person, rather than their appearance or rank, were more important in choosing a marriage. Work outside the house was promoted for women in Malaysia, India, and Malaysia. Both women and men placed a premium on education and professionalism.

Most said they wanted to learn a skill or get a professional degree, or that they were working on it. Several couples talk about how marriage helped them find true love. Respect, rather than equality, resonated with both men and women. They were more concerned with how women are objectified in the media, in particular. Husbands who were both pious and competent of providing for their families piqued men's interest. Women desired a man who was older and had more education than they had. The frequency with which women are abandoned by men astounded both men and women. They believed that women had a right to be supported by their husbands and children's dads. However, this did not imply that they believed women should be conscripted into primarily caregiving tasks.

Cultural Influence

In Pakistan, female senior people had twice the rate of depression as males (33 percent vs. 15.7 percent). In most investigations, female gender has been found to be substantially related with depression. Because of gender and generational inequalities in a joint family structure, elderly ladies are more likely to be

depressed than senior males (Ather M Taqui, Ahmed Itrat, & et al., 2007). In the men's focus group, one guy indicated that his wife had gradually determined that she wanted to become a medical assistant, and that he supported her decision. In our society, no man is permitted to ask his wife to work. You can't stop her, even if she can bring you money or work. One man in the men's focus group remarked that this was his method of expressing his admiration for her role.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The power of faith will have a significant impact on the future of the conventional family. When followers of different religions work together to tackle risks and challenges to the family, the responses will be more potent. The deterioration of the extended family institution, as well as its numerous ramifications, must be addressed in order to develop new societal processes. Because family health and household governance are so intimately linked, policymakers must recognize the relevance of excellent household governance or home economics to a healthy family life (Bakar, Osman., 2011).

Even though there is no direct ruling in Islam about which family system one should follow, the following considerations can be taken into account when deciding:

Firstly, Muslim men and women are asked to stay segregated in order to avoid unlawful relations. However, it becomes difficult to do so when living in an extended family. Furthermore, there is a lack of freedom and privacy for couples.

Secondly, research has proved that he prevalence of depression in the older population was somewhat high, which is cause for concern. Shift to nuclear family system could have a significant negative impact on the elderly's physical and mental health (Ather M Taqui, Ahmed Itrat, & et al., 2007). However, due to inequalities in the joint family structure, elderly females are more likely to be depressed than elderly males. This inequality suggests that nuclear family may be a more secure environment as according to Islam, men and women are to be treated with equal respect.

Thirdly, another important aspect of marriage in Islam is providing a secure environment to one's children. Research suggests that children perform better educationally and socially as they feel less isolated in joint families. However, this problem can be tackled through communication and quality family time.

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