

establish a family remarkably different from previous families, with new concepts of relations, rights and morals: a family which does not ensure economical support of women, fails to recognize women's traditional roles as valuable, is unable to dominate its members' personal interests, and has restricted authority to nurture its children. And this signifies, according to thinkers, future collapse of the family structure. Iranian families have also been influenced by modernity. To provide a detailed elaboration on factors of adverse effect on the family structure, they are discussed individually as follows:

### **5.1. Effect of Changes in Beliefs and Values on Weakness of the Family Structure**

Gradual dimming of faith, propagation of hedonism, more emphasis on individual gains rather than those of family as a whole, and love affairs have caused family members to show less tolerance in the face of familial adversities and problems. Mothers prefer career success over looking after their children and show less concern about emotional and affective damages likely to be caused to the family. On the other hand, fathers have found sufficient to satisfy, from among their many responsibilities in the family, the 'earn a living' responsibility, which interestingly has been halved over time to be borne by both father and mother. Owing to the gradual dimming of 'chastity' in the society, less need to establish a family is felt (Mosavati, 1996, p. 164).

### **5.2. Deviance in the Family Structure**

An instance of deviance observed in the family structure is the prevalence of democracy, rather than hierarchical power, which places father, mother and children at the same level of decision making. No family member is supposed and permitted to interfere with other members' affairs or to impose his/her own opinion on others. On the contrary, a religious family is developed along its hierarchical structure with father at the top and an immense ambit of responsibilities has been defined for the man of the family together with numerous pieces of advice.

In his interpretation of 'Husbands are guardians of their wives' Allameh Tabatabaei explains that, "Guardian is someone who undertakes to be responsible for someone else's affairs. Guardianship of a husband over his wife is not of the kind that waives the wife's rights to take possession of her assets and properties. Indeed, wife can operate independently in her individual and social rights and make arrangements to provide means of satisfying those rights" (Tabatabaei, 1997, 4: 365-7).

Imam Ghosheiri, providing an interpretation of the above verse, declares that heavier burden is placed on shoulders of men because the burden of responsibility should be borne based on a person's strength and capability (Ghosheiri, 2: 25). However, changes in attitudes of men and women have also influenced their tastes and inclinations and this has entailed the emergence of structures consistent with the newly adopted tastes and inclinations. That is why the parity of roles of men and women, irrespective of the heavy, physical and emotional burden of such parity which is imposed on women, still remains an ideal being sought by women (Beirami, 1999, p. 64).

### **5.3. Microsystems Affecting the Family Structure**

Members, even to an ideal family, are also under influence of the society and its Microsystems which over time make alteration to the structure of family. Some Microsystems of damage causing effect are presented below:

#### **5.3.1. Mass Media**

Mass media, one component of a country's educational and cultural system, operates as a rival for the family's function of upbringing children. Sometimes, intentionally or unintentionally, a wrong role model is depicted by mass media. To make viewers laugh, as an instance, an irresponsible, foolish father is depicted.

#### **5.3.2. Education System and Higher Education System**

In spite of the religious approach, sexual differences have been disregarded by education and higher education systems. So these systems are not able to satisfy the expectation of nurturing a religious person for they have their roots at the human-centered western system.

#### **5.3.3. Economical System**

In the realm of making policies and ratifying statutes, employment of women should be considered as secondary\_ compared to their primary duties as wives and mothers i.e. the emotional pillar of the family\_ in order to create an Islamic well-balanced family. To this end, the economical system should also provide job opportunities particular for women and consistent with their specific conditions (Azad, 1998, p. 203).

## **6. Failure to Pay Ample Attention to Affective Demands of the Family Members**

The most important factor helping a family survive adversities and continue its development is the affective relationship between its members. Establishing, and attempting to preserve, affective relationships in the family in particular between both spouses are highly recommended by Islam. That is to say, family is a chain and family members its rings. What connects and keeps rings in the chain is love (Mahdavi Kani, 2010, p. 257). Quran considers 'love' as a goal of marriage:

"Of His signs is that He created for you spouses of your own nature so that your body seeks comfort

next to theirs and He established friendship and mercy between you and them” (Room, verse 21).

Mohammad Kamel Hasan Mahami, a contemporary Quranologist, interprets the above verse, “this verse exemplifies friendship and mercy which is established between the spouses. Owing to this friendship and affection, wife and husband find comfort and pleasure in the face of life difficulties” (Mohami, 2013, p. 68)

Another meaning meant by Quran of the affective relationship among the family members is kindness: “People of Elysium state: We all were kind to our families. Happiness and welfare of our families were important to us. We treated them kindly and advised and invited them to good” (Tabatabai, lunar year 1417, V 19: 15).

Making balanced expectations by family members of each other, existing a responsible relationship between parent(s) and children, particularly playing appropriately and actively the ‘management role’ by the father and the ‘upbringing and affective role’ by mother, softening legal relations among family members with good faith, responsible relations among relatives to provide support and guidance and to foster hope and happiness in life, taking into account the then social conditions and having flexibility in activities and roles so as to resolve social problems, paying attention to the religious development of the family members, morals and social conventions, among others, are issues required to be emphasized on for families to be enabled to satisfy their missions.

However, the role external factors play in strengthening or weakening the family’s efficacy should be noticed as a hindrance to or reinforcement of parents’ performance and also as a factor affecting parents’ personality and function. What presently is of tremendous importance to the Islamic system is to adopt policies and methods which coordinate activities of all institutions in order to promote the status of the family and to remove obstacles in the way of creating families of high efficiency (Gidenz, 1994, p. 434).

To clarify performance of a well-balanced family, some guidelines are presented as to the family’s makeup and process, formation of relations in the family, affections inside it, and organization of a balanced family in a religious society:

## **7. A Well-Balanced Family**

A well-balanced family is not a family free of imperfection; its members also face problems and predicaments but they choose a reasonable way of dealing with them. A well-balanced family can be characterized by the following features:

### **7.1. A Struggling Spirit**

A struggling spirit helps family members avoid looking at life relations as deterministic. Family members regard each other worthy, respect human dignity of each other and attempt to create innovations in life.

### **7.2. Affective Exchange versus Affective Freezing**

In the well-balanced family, affections are exchanged verbally or by acts. Family members express their love and avoid withholding their pure affections from each other. In the rich culture of Islam, displaying love and affections is of importance to the extent that the Prophet has declared, “Husband’s saying ‘I love you’ to his wife never fades away from her heart” (al Horro ol Ameli, V 20, Love of Wives, p. 23, Hadith 9).

### **7.3. Optimism**

In an optimistic family, spouses try to see positive points of each other. On the other hand, they disregard negative aspects and attempt to discover and reinforce the other spouse’s pleasurable points of personality.

### **7.4. Convergence**

Members of a convergent family are and act in coordination and give priority to common life interests rather than to their own personal interests.

### **7.5. Complementarity**

Quran beautifully portrays the spousal relationship, “You are clothes for your wives and they are clothes for you.” (Baghareh, Verse 187).

### **7.6. Magnanimity versus Childish Behavior**

Generosity and magnanimity, covering over and not gossiping about someone’s error or bad action, trying to augment peace of mind and giving the mistake-maker a chance to correct his/her mistakes, secrecy and respecting each other all can be of great importance in marital life.

### **7.7. Constructive Criticism versus Destructive Criticism**

Criticizing the other spouse in an amicable private way, with consideration of his/her sensitivity to criticism may

help remove or alleviate marital life problems, improve spouses' behavior toward each other and bring about moral development of them. Such a criticism should be mild enough not to provoke nervous reaction of the addressed spouse.

### **7.8. Reasonable Treatment versus Power Exertion**

Establishing a balance in marital life entails rationalization of the foundation of spousal relationship to help reason, but not personal taste or power, prevail on the scene of marital life. (To exert power does not create power.)

### **7.9. Awareness or Unawareness of Spousal Duties**

Creating a house of comfortable atmosphere which helps family members relax relies to some extent on consistency of rational wants and expectations of the spouses. Tuning the spouses' expectations of each other is largely associated to their awareness of legal rights and obligations they have (amir Hoseini, 2003, p. 12-4).

## **8. Strategies to Heal Damages to Women and Family System**

This section suggests useful ways to resolve family problems and help improve situation of the family.

### **8.1. Adopting a Holistic View**

In making decisions or plans for family issues, experts in such various fields as religious, social, educational, and economical sciences should convene and exchange their knowledge and opinions so that a decision or plan to be made is not a one-dimensional one, insufficient to deal with the whole issue in all its aspects.

### **8.2. Interconnection of the Areas of Expertise and Execution**

It is critical that executive organs and scientific research centers establish an institutionalized connection so as to help 'an idealism intertwined with realism' prevail the atmosphere of decision making for women or family issues.

### **8.3. Creation of a Sophisticated System of Statistics and Information**

Insufficiency of statistics and scarcity of comprehensive information on the facilities of the then society seems to be an enduring problem of our country over years. No precise information has been acquired on demands of many social classes in the country yet. Consequently, the available facilities are not utilized effectually for resolution of women's problems and also executive authorities are hindered to make in-time decisions with respect to the social harms.

### **8.4. Taking into Account All Opinions and Viewpoints**

To come up with a balanced view, ideas and opinions of all family members with regard to the issue in question have to be considered. After modifying all the views, their commonalities are utilized as the basis of the final solution.

### **8.5. Interconnection of Various Institutions and Organs**

All (executive, legislative, or judicial) organs and institutions which operate in close relation to the familial matters should establish an organized connection with each other. Otherwise, each organ or institution serves, irrespective of the effects which might be exerted by other organs and institutions, to make plans, pass regulations and enforce them, and this may give rise to more problems.

### **8.6. Accurate Legislation for Improvement of Women Situation**

Although statutes, on their own, are not able to ensure rights and excellence of woman personality in the society, they could be very effectual provided that social, economical and cultural conditions have been taken into account while ratifying them.

### **8.7. Local Mechanisms**

Our culture is made up of Islamic and Iranian conventions and traditions. Guidelines and strategies, therefore, should have their roots in the Islamic, Iranian culture.

## **9. Results and Discussion**

In the last couple of decades, an Iranian family like families in other societies has undergone important changes. Increased inclination to celibacy and single life; changes in attitudes; higher familial enmities and consequently increased number of divorces; dimmed spirit of compromise; decreased efficiency of the family in adjusting sexual behavior of, in support and control of, and in provision of peace of mind and gratification of affective

needs of its members; and weakened role of the family in fostering its members' sociability and morals are some problems encountered by Iranian families. Deviance in the structure of family and important Microsystems is also harmful. On the other hand, struggling spirit, affective exchange, optimism, understanding, convergence, complementarity, participation, covering over the mistakes committed by family members, rightocracy, awareness and observation of spousal rights and duties are characteristic of a well-balanced family. It can be concluded that no solution will resolve problems of women and family system unless it has been reached on the basis of Quran and the Prophet's way of life by scientific endeavors of thinkers. In referring to the holy texts, however, it is critical to, instead of contenting with Quran verses proper and fatwas, make scientific theories beside profound understanding of those verses and fatwas and to build solid pillars, on Islamic tenets, for policy making and planning on a macro scale. And all this is to make the scientific community develop an attitude which not only attends, with a family-oriented approach, to the efficiency of the family and tries to solve social problems but it also provides support for women rights. On the way to promote status and functions of the family, adoption of a holistic view, establishment of a close connection between areas of expertise and execution, creation of a precise system of appraisal, survey, statistics and information, consideration of all opinions and viewpoints, establishment of a close interconnection among organizations, attention to the cultural issues, accurate aptly-timed legislation, avoidance of extremes, and consideration of local mechanisms could be of great help.

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