

Women's Work and Its Impact on the Family – A Legal and Sharia-Based Study

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Abstract:

Islam affirms a woman's right to work in professions that align with her abilities and natural disposition while establishing regulations to safeguard her dignity and protect her from potential moral challenges. It also emphasizes that employment should not interfere with her familial duties or impose excessive burdens beyond her capacity. Furthermore, legislation grants women the right to stipulate employment as a condition in the marriage contract to ensure the protection of this right.

In the modern era, women's employment has sometimes become a necessity due to economic conditions or society's need for specific professions. Despite the various motivations for work, it has both positive and negative consequences that may impact her relationship with her family, including her husband and children.

Keywords: Effects of women's employment; family relationship; wife's work

المخلص: يقر الإسلام بحق المرأة في العمل في المهن التي تتناسب مع قدراتها وتكوينها الفطري، مع وضع الضوابط التي تكفل صون كرامتها وحمايتها من التحديات الأخلاقية المحتملة. كما يؤكد على ألا يتعارض العمل مع واجباتها الأسرية أو يحملها أعباء تفوق طاقتها. علاوة على ذلك، تتيح التشريعات للمرأة الحق في اشتراط العمل كأحد بنود عقد الزواج، ضماناً لحماية هذا الحق.

وفي العصر الحديث، أصبح عمل المرأة في بعض الأحيان ضرورة تفرضها الظروف الاقتصادية أو حاجة المجتمع إلى مهن بعينها. ورغم تنوع الدوافع وراء عمل المرأة، فإن لهذا العمل آثاراً إيجابية وسلبية قد تنعكس على علاقتها بأسرتها، بما في ذلك زوجها وأطفالها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آثار عمل المرأة؛ العلاقة الأسرية؛ عمل الزوجة

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the traditional or stereotypical family structure, the man is considered the primary breadwinner, spending most of his time seeking livelihood, while the woman, particularly the mother, is expected to focus on raising children and managing household affairs, as she typically spends more time at home compared to the man. This division of roles between men and women was previously viewed as a form of complementarity between them. However, some voices have begun to see it as discrimination against women, arguing that women are capable of competing with men in the labor market, thereby achieving financial independence and freeing themselves from dependency on men.

With the increasing demands for equality between men and women in rights and duties, discussions on women's employment have gained significant prominence. It has even become one of the criteria for assessing the development of Islamic societies in light of the Western materialistic perspective on life. However, this trend has begun to face opposition, even from some Westerners, who have come to recognize the innate and natural roles that men and women are predisposed to fulfill, as stated in the Quran: "***And the male is not like the female***" (Aal-e-Imran: 36). Indeed, every individual is facilitated for the purpose for which they were created.

This study aims to provide a well-balanced framework for Muslim women when they choose to work outside their homes, ensuring that their rights are safeguarded while clarifying their obligations. Islam has granted special honor to women and has allowed them to dedicate themselves to their primary and most noble role in life: motherhood. Therefore, Islamic law has assigned men the financial responsibility of providing for women—whether as daughters, wives, mothers, or financially dependent relatives—to protect them from the burdens associated with employment.

In this context, the Algerian Family Law has adopted a moderate stance inspired by Islamic teachings, seeking to strike a balance between ensuring family welfare and enabling women to contribute to society, without compromising their fundamental role.

Undoubtedly, women's employment has significant and far-reaching effects, particularly as its influence extends to all family members. The increasing participation of women in the workforce has also raised concerns about its impact on marital relationships and divorce rates. Conflicts arising between spouses due to women's employment may threaten family stability, thereby contributing to the rising incidence of divorce.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the central research problem:

What is the legal and Sharia-based foundation for women's employment? What are the consequences of such employment on the family?

From this primary question, several sub-questions emerge, including: Does a woman's employment affect her rights and responsibilities? Is there a correlation between a wife's employment and the stability of her family?

To address this issue, the study adopts a **comparative approach**, analyzing the rulings established by Islamic jurisprudence and Algerian family law. This is particularly relevant given that the Algerian legislator refers to Islamic law in cases where no explicit legal provisions exist. Additionally, the study includes a comparative analysis with relevant regulations in select Arab legal systems.

Furthermore, the study employs an **analytical method** to examine the impact of women's employment on the family. It is important to clarify that, in this research, the term "women's employment" specifically refers to work outside the home, and the focus is exclusively on employed women in their role as wives.

The researcher uses the term **"women's employment"** instead of **"wives' employment"** when discussing general legal provisions that apply to all women, regardless of their marital status. This distinction is made because the employment of an unmarried woman is less likely to directly impact her family compared to a married woman, who is both a wife and the primary caretaker of the household.

Additionally, the study primarily addresses **employment outside the home**, as remote work or home-based entrepreneurial activities have a significantly lesser impact on family dynamics due to the woman's continued physical presence.

To thoroughly address the research problem, the study is structured into two main chapters:

- The first chapter examines the **legal and Sharia-based foundation** of women's employment.
- The second chapter explores the **impact of women's employment on the family**.

1. Chapter One: The Legal and Sharia-Based Foundation of Women's Employment

Islam has honored women in an unprecedented manner, ensuring that every aspect of their lives is regulated under Sharia law, including their right to work. In pursuit of gender equality, legislators have embraced the concept of women's employment in various legal frameworks, even extending special protections to working women. This chapter examines the Sharia-based and legal foundations of women's employment in two sections.

1.1 Section One: The Sharia-Based Foundation of Women's Employment

Islam does not prohibit women from working; rather, it encourages them to be active members of society. Numerous Quranic verses and prophetic traditions emphasize the virtue of honorable work—whether for men or women—promoting diligence, productivity, and lawful earnings. Furthermore, Islamic law not only affirms women's right to work but also establishes specific regulations to safeguard them from potential harm.

1.1.1 Subsection One: The Legitimacy of Women's Employment

Islam affirms that a woman's primary role is nurturing future generations. However, it does not deprive her of the right to work and earn a livelihood. This principle is well-documented in both the **Quran** and **Sunnah**.

A. Evidence from the Quran

Islam places women in a **respected and integral** position within society, viewing them as fundamental contributors to its progress (Al-Juwair, 1995, p. 75).

The Quran emphasizes that both men and women have the right to earn and benefit from their work:

"For men is a share of what they have earned, and for women is a share of what they have earned." (Surah An-Nisa: 32)

This verse **clearly establishes** that both genders have an equal right to work and earn without preference given to one over the other. Similarly, Allah states:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while they are a believer—We will surely grant them a good life, and We will surely give them their reward according to the best of what they used to do." (Surah An-Nahl: 97)

These verses apply to all forms of righteous labor, provided they align with Islamic principles. Islam grants women the freedom to work, own property, and manage their financial affairs independently, without requiring their husband's approval. Women have historically engaged in commerce, issued religious rulings (fatwas), and even participated in wartime efforts—serving as nurses, caregivers, and support personnel. (Al-Juwair, 1995, p. 75.76).

One specific form of employment mentioned in the Quran is wet nursing, which is both acknowledged and compensated under Islamic law. Allah says:

"If they nurse (your children) for you, give them their payment and confer among yourselves in the acceptable way. But if you are in discord, then another woman will nurse (the child) for him." (Surah At-Talaq: 6)

This verse establishes the validity of women's employment by recognizing nursing as a paid profession, reinforcing the principle that women have the right to work and receive fair wages for their labor.

B. Evidence from the Sunnah

In her study titled *"Hadiths on Women's Employment: Collection, Verification, and Analysis,"* Dr. Saadia Ali Al-Kabir gathered **14 authentic hadiths** related to women's work. Among these hadiths is the narration of **Umm Atiyyah (may Allah be pleased with her)**, who said:

"I went on seven military expeditions with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him), staying behind in their encampments, preparing food for them, treating the wounded, and tending to the sick."

(Reported by Muslim in his Sahih collection) (I-Kabeer, 2020, p. 3310)

Another narration from **Al-Shifa bint Abdullah** states:

"The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) entered upon me while I was with Hafsa and said to me: 'Why don't you teach her the Ruqyah (healing supplication) for ant bites, just as you taught her how to write?'"(Abu Dawood, n.d.; Al-Albani, Ed.)

Through an analysis of these hadiths, we observe that **women actively participated in medical and nursing professions** during the Prophet's time, demonstrating **their essential contributions to society with dedication and compassion**. (I-Kabeer, 2020, p. 3310)

Women also played **significant roles in education and advisory positions**. Lady Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was a leading scholar who **issued legal rulings (fatwas)** and served as a primary source of knowledge for the Companions. Similarly, **Umm Salama (may Allah be pleased with her)** provided **wise counsel** in critical situations. In commerce and entrepreneurship, **Lady Khadijah (may Allah be pleased with her)** stands as an exemplary model of a successful businesswoman.

Islamic jurisprudence is **replete with references** to women's professions, indicating their recognition and acceptance in historical Islamic societies. Nearly every classical **fiqh book** includes references such as:

"If a woman is a washer, a wet nurse, a midwife, or an employee..."

These references **implicitly acknowledge** the existence and acceptance of these professions during those times. Some jurists explicitly stated that **midwifery** and **funeral washing** were recognized professions for women. (Aql & Buraik, 2009, p. 76)

Scholarly Views on Women's Employment

Islamic scholars have historically debated **the conditions under which women may work**, resulting in two primary perspectives:

First View: Work is Allowed Only in Cases of Necessity

This group acknowledges that **women's employment is permissible**, but they **do not prefer it** unless there is **an urgent need or necessity**. Their reasoning is based on the principle that

financial responsibility (nafaqah) is a religious duty upon men—whether as fathers, husbands, brothers, or sons.

- According to this view, a woman's **primary role** is to remain at home, fulfilling her responsibilities of **motherhood and family care**.
- Staying at home is considered an **honor** and **protection** for women, as Islam obligates men to financially support them.
- Any man who **neglects his duty** of providing for the women under his care **commits a sin and incurs divine punishment**. (Shehab, 2019, p. 400)

Second View: Work is a Woman's Right, Without Necessity

This school of thought argues that **a woman has the absolute right to work**, regardless of financial necessity, as long as she adheres to **Islamic guidelines**. According to this perspective:

- A woman is **equal to a man** in her right to work and manage her own finances.
- She should **not be prevented** from working if she chooses to do so.
- The **only requirement** is compliance with **Islamic ethical and legal principles**. (Shehab, 2019, p. 401)

Conclusion: A Balanced Perspective on Women's Employment

The **permissibility of women's work** is agreed upon by all Islamic scholars. However, the **dispute** lies in **whether necessity is a prerequisite** for employment:

- Some scholars believe that **women should only work out of necessity**, due to the principle that **men bear financial responsibility** in Islam.
- Others argue that **women have an unconditional right to work**, as long as they respect **Islamic guidelines**.

When comparing these scholarly opinions to **modern realities**, we find that **economic necessity** is a significant driver of women's employment today. Rising **living costs** often **compel** women to seek jobs, as many families cannot rely solely on the husband's income. However, **not all working women do so out of necessity**; some **pursue financial independence and self-fulfillment**, influenced by contemporary notions of **women's empowerment and gender equality**.

Moreover, **adherence to Islamic guidelines** regarding women's work remains a **subjective matter**, varying from one woman to another. Even **work environments** play a role—some workplaces **support** religious practices (e.g., allowing the hijab), while others **prohibit** them. This highlights the **complexity** of the issue and the **importance of balancing women's rights with Islamic principles**.

1.1.2. Guidelines for Women's Employment in Islamic Law

Islamic law permits women to work, but it establishes certain guidelines to ensure that their work aligns with their natural disposition, physical capabilities, and moral principles. The most notable regulations found in classical jurisprudence include:

- A. **Work must be suitable for a woman's nature and abilities.**
 - It should align with her gentle and nurturing disposition, such as teaching women, caring for children, treating female patients, and similar professions.
- B. **Work must not conflict with her primary responsibilities at home.**
 - A woman's work should not consume all her time or interfere with her duties towards her husband and children.

- Her working hours should be **limited** to ensure that she fulfills her family obligations.
- C. **A woman must obtain permission from her guardian (wali).**
 - If unmarried, she requires the consent of her parents.
 - If married, she needs her husband's approval before working.
- D. **The work environment must be free from prohibited (haram) elements.**
 - This includes avoiding inappropriate dress codes, excessive mixing with men, and any form of immoral behavior.
- E. **She must adhere to Islamic guidelines for leaving the house.**
 - This includes wearing proper hijab and maintaining modesty in her behavior.
- F. **Some scholars also emphasize that a woman's employment should be based on necessity.**
 - Either she needs to work for financial reasons, or society requires her contribution in essential fields like medicine and education.

These **Islamic regulations** ensure that a woman earns a living in a dignified manner, fulfilling both her religious duties and societal responsibilities while attaining happiness in both this life and the Hereafter. (Khalaf, 2016, p. 145)

1.2. Section two: The Legal Basis for Women's Employment

Examining the legal foundation of women's employment within **family law** requires an analysis of two key aspects:

Where this right is recognized in legal texts.

How the law protects working women.

1.2.1 Subsection one: Legal Recognition of Women's Employment in Family Law

The **Algerian Family Law of 1984** did **not** explicitly address women's right to work. However, the 2005 amendment (Ordinance 05-02) formally recognized this right, mentioning it in several provisions, most notably in marriage conditions.

Marriage contracts in Algerian law must meet certain legal conditions and be registered with civil authorities. Spouses are allowed to set specific conditions within the contract, including the wife's right to work. (Dlanda, 2007, p. 30)

Since the foundation of the relationship between a man and a woman is built on affection and mercy to establish a unified and integrated family, it is essential that this relationship is based on the principle of mutual consent. This principle ensures the freedom of both men and women in concluding the marriage contract, allowing each party to choose their partner freely. This freedom also grants women the right to set conditions they deem necessary for the contract, including the condition of their employment. (Sassia, 2020, p. 457)

- **Before amendment:**
 - *Article 19 stated: "Spouses may stipulate any conditions they deem necessary in the marriage contract, provided they do not contradict this law."*
- **After amendment:**
 - *Article 19 was revised to explicitly include:*
 - *"Spouses may stipulate any conditions they deem necessary in the marriage contract or in a subsequent formal contract, particularly regarding polygamy and women's employment, provided they do not contradict this law."*

This amendment solidified a woman's right to work as a contractual right. If a wife includes a condition that prevents her husband from prohibiting her employment, he is legally bound to honor it. (Ben Chouikh, 2008, p. 128)

Legal Issues Arising from Work-Related Conditions

- **Disputes over Work After Marriage**
 - Some husbands agree to their wives' employment at the beginning of the marriage but later demand they quit.
 - If the wife continues working without her husband's approval, she may be considered disobedient (**nashiz**), potentially losing financial rights (e.g., alimony). (Bouchachi, 2024, p. 7)
 - The Algerian legislator did not specify enforcement mechanisms for cases where a husband breaks this agreement.
- **Comparison with Moroccan Law**
 - **Moroccan law (Article 48, second paragraph)** allows a husband to petition the court to modify or cancel the condition if the wife's job negatively affects their marriage. (*Moroccan Family Code, 2004*)
 - This provision protects both spouses and prevents unnecessary divorce. Algerian law lacks a similar safeguard.

According to Moroccan law, a husband who has agreed to his wife's employment condition may resort to the judiciary if he believes that her work conflicts with her marital responsibilities and duties. In such cases, the court has the authority to revoke the condition while maintaining the marital relationship. This provision in Moroccan law is commendable, as it helps prevent family breakdown.

In discussing a wife's right to stipulate her continued employment and protection from being prevented from working, it is important to note that, conversely, a husband also has the right to prohibit his wife from working outside the home by including such a condition in the marriage contract.

Can a Husband Prevent His Wife from Working? This issue involves two **Islamic legal principles**:

1. **"Silence does not imply consent."**
 - If a husband did not object to his wife's job **before marriage**, his silence does not mean he agreed.
 - He retains the right to prevent her from working later, unless the condition was explicitly stated in the contract.
2. **"Silence, when speech is needed, is a form of consent."**
 - If a woman was working **before marriage**, the husband's silence may be interpreted as tacit approval of her job. (Sissia, 2020, p. 458)

Between the two opinions, I favor the first one, as employment is a crucial matter that must be discussed and agreed upon before marriage. Silence cannot be considered a stance; rather, if a woman wishes to continue working, she must explicitly stipulate this condition to her husband. In turn, he must clearly state his position, either accepting or rejecting it, to prevent potential conflicts in the future.

To ensure the enforcement of Article 19, the legislator stipulated in Article 9/53 of the same law that a wife has the right to seek dissolution of marriage if, at any point, the husband breaches his promise, violates the agreement, and refuses to uphold the condition stipulated in the marriage

contract (the right to work). This represents the second instance in which women's employment is addressed in the Family Law.

With regard to evidence, reference can be made to the general rules of proof, as Algerian law applies in cases where the condition is not documented in writing. Accordingly, and based on paragraph 9 of the amended Article 53, the wife has the right to request dissolution of marriage for the following reasons: "Violation of the conditions agreed upon in the marriage contract." (Ben Chouikh, 2008, p. 137)

The legislator has not addressed the scenario in which a woman fails to fulfill her role as a mother and wife or neglects her household and family responsibilities due to her work. Does this justify the husband's right to prevent her from working without facing a dissolution of marriage lawsuit (*tatlik*)? And if such a lawsuit is accepted, would the husband be considered arbitrary and thus required to pay compensation, even though the primary reason for the divorce is her neglect of family responsibilities? (*Bouchachi, 2024, p. 9*)

The legislator addressed women's employment for a third time when discussing custody in the second paragraph of Article 67. It was established that a woman's work outside the home does not constitute grounds for forfeiting her custodial rights. This represents one of the legal protections granted to working wives, which will be further examined in the following section.

1.2.2 Subection Two: Aspects of Protection for Working Wives in Family Law

The legislator did not merely acknowledge a woman's right to work; rather, it ensured its protection within marriage by allowing a woman to stipulate her right to work in the marriage contract. Additionally, further legal protections were granted throughout the marital relationship, including the right to financial support (*nafaqa*), financial independence, and, in cases of marital dissolution, the right to child custody.

A. Financial Support (Nafaqa)

Financial support (*nafaqa*) includes a wife's essential needs, such as food, clothing, medical care, housing, and all other necessities according to social customs. (*Article 78 of the Algerian Family Code, 2005*)

A husband is legally obligated to provide for his wife, as this is one of the fundamental effects of a valid marriage contract, and this obligation remains in effect even if the wife is financially independent.

A husband is required to provide *nafaqa* regardless of his financial status, whether he is wealthy or facing financial hardship. This obligation originates from Islamic law (Sharia), as established by the Quran and Sunnah, and was later reinforced by statutory law.

In Algerian Family Law, the legislator explicitly affirms a wife's right to financial support, which becomes enforceable upon consummation of the marriage or upon her availability for the husband (Article 74 of the Algerian Family Code, 2005). However, the law does not specify circumstances under which this right is forfeited. Notably, there is no explicit legal provision addressing the relationship between a wife's employment and her entitlement to financial support. Thus, the default legal principle remains in effect—the wife is entitled to financial support from her husband.

A marriage contract may include a clause where the wife waives her right to financial support in exchange for her right to work or to continue her employment after marriage.

Additionally, Article 76 of the Family Law transfers the obligation of child support from the father to the mother if the father is financially incapable and the mother is financially able.

Despite these legal provisions securing a working wife's right to financial support, this right can be forfeited if she is deemed disobedient (*nashiz*). However, Algerian law does not provide a precise definition of disobedience (*nushuz*) or its conditions; rather, it simply recognizes it as a legal ground for divorce.

A ruling issued by the Algerian Supreme Court on 07/09/1984 (Case No. 33762) established that:

"A wife's right to financial support is forfeited only upon proven refusal to comply with a court ruling requiring her return to the marital home, which renders her disobedient to her husband."

Based on this ruling, a working wife loses her right to financial support if her employment is deemed an act of disobedience to her husband. This may occur in various scenarios, including:

- If her job violates religious or legal principles (e.g., employment in a nightclub).
- If she works without her husband's consent or approval.
- If her job occupies all her time, preventing her from fulfilling marital duties.

B. Financial Independence

Islamic law, followed by Algerian Family Law, recognizes a woman's financial independence, granting her the right to own property, make wills and donations, and dispose of her financial assets as she sees fit, provided she is of legal age and mentally competent.

Article 37 of the Family Law provides an additional safeguard for working women, ensuring their right to retain control over financial assets acquired within the family framework. This is particularly important given the customary practice in Algerian society, where property is often registered in the husband's name, even if the wife has made significant financial contributions. (*Bouchachi, 2024, p. 11*)

The implications of a wife's financial independence include:

1. Right to own and manage her assets within the legal framework.
2. No obligation to contribute financially to household expenses unless she chooses to do so voluntarily.
3. Freedom to manage her wealth without requiring her husband's consent, although he may offer advice for her financial well-being.
4. A husband cannot take or use his wife's money without her explicit consent.
5. Even if the wife is wealthy, this does not relieve the husband of his legal duty to provide financial support. (*Shihab, 2019, p. 423*)

C. Child Custody (Hadana)

The 2005 amendment to the Algerian Family Law introduced a significant change to Article 67, which now states:

"A woman's employment cannot be considered a reason for losing her right to custody, provided that the best interest of the child is taken into account in all cases."

This amendment reinforces the legal standing of working mothers by affirming that a mother's employment should not be used against her in custody disputes. This is particularly crucial in cases where a mother has no financial support and must work to sustain herself and her children.

Previously, some fathers would argue that a working mother cannot adequately care for her children, using this as a legal basis to challenge her custody rights. By explicitly addressing this issue, the legislator resolved the dispute in favor of working mothers.

However, this right is not absolute—the court must prioritize the child’s best interests when granting custody. A mother’s employment must not endanger the child’s well-being, whether physically or morally. Thus, if a mother’s job poses a threat to the child’s health or upbringing, the court may reconsider her custody rights. (Bouchachi, 2024, p. 14)

Conclusion

The Algerian Family Law provides a comprehensive framework protecting working wives through financial security (entitlement to nafaqa, unless forfeited due to disobedience), autonomous financial status (independent ownership and management of assets), and legal protection in custody matters, ensuring that employment does not automatically disqualify a mother from caring for her children.

While these legal safeguards are significant, certain ambiguities remain, particularly regarding the enforcement of financial support and the legal definition of disobedience. Further legal reforms may be necessary to ensure full protection for working women within the marital framework.

2. Second Chapter : The Effects of a Wife’s Employment on the Family

The working wife considered in this study is one who engages in official and regular employment outside the home, whether in the education, healthcare, or administrative sectors, or in any regulated profession or independent work for a salary. She carries out this employment while simultaneously fulfilling her role as a wife, tending to her husband and meeting his various needs, as well as her role as a mother, caring for her children’s physical and psychological well-being. Additionally, she manages her household responsibilities, including cleaning, cooking, and laundry.

This section examines both the positive and negative effects of a wife’s employment, which are almost inevitable consequences of her working outside the home. It also explores the broader implications of female employment on the family, referring to those effects that may or may not occur, meaning they are not necessarily inevitable.

2.1. Section one: The Nature of the Familial Effects of a Woman’s Employment (Positive and Negative)

A woman’s employment outside the home has both positive and negative consequences that affect her, her husband, and her children. The extent of these effects varies depending on several factors, including the woman’s educational level, the number of children, the husband’s education level, place of residence, duration of marriage, and the nature of the job. (Aajib & Kouidri, 2022, p. 437)

2.1.1 Subsection one: The Positive Effects of a Wife’s Employment

Examining the impact of female employment from a positive perspective highlights several benefits. Employment grants women financial independence while allowing them to contribute to the household income, improving the family’s standard of living and reducing financial burdens on the husband. This embodies the concept of equality and partnership between spouses. Moreover, the psychological satisfaction a woman derives from work can positively influence her familial relationships.

Work provides women with a sense of self-worth and achievement. Its significance extends beyond economic necessity; it also plays a crucial role in personal fulfillment and self-actualization. A working wife generally enhances the family's economic standing, supports her children's education, secures their future, and serves as a positive role model, reinforcing the values of hard work and self-reliance. (Shihab, 2019, p. 399)

Financial independence and self-affirmation are interconnected. By securing economic autonomy, a woman also gains emotional and psychological independence, strengthening her sense of social value both within the family and in the broader community. (Farhat, 2012, p. 127). Furthermore, a wife's employment fosters an environment of cooperation, selflessness, and sacrifice within the family, increasing mutual affection and strengthening family cohesion while instilling a sense of responsibility among all members.

Additionally, work broadens a woman's intellectual horizons and nurtures her personal development. It serves as an effective means of utilizing her free time productively rather than squandering it on trivial matters. (Kassir, 2019)

Female employment is closely linked to economic factors, as working women assume an additional role alongside their household responsibilities, striving to enhance the family's standard of living and fulfill their children's various needs, including clothing, food, and educational materials.

Although a working mother may spend long hours away from home, she remains committed to ensuring her children's material, social, and psychological well-being. (Farhat, 2012, p. 130). Moreover, employment enables women to prove their competence and effectiveness, counteracting any feelings of marginalization within the household. It grants them confidence, strength, and reassurance regarding their future and that of their children, particularly in the event of a husband's absence or death. Additionally, it fosters a sense of significance and enhances their capacity for productivity and contribution. (Mahmadiya & Boutoutan, 2013, p. 11)

2.1.2 Subsection two: The Negative Effects of a Wife's Employment

A. The Negative Impact of a Wife's Employment on Marital Relations and Stability

Psychological studies consistently indicate that working women experience various psychological disturbances due to their employment outside the home, even though they enter the workforce voluntarily. Many working women suffer from depression and feelings of guilt, as they struggle to balance their professional responsibilities with their roles as wives and mothers. (Aajeb & Goudri, year, p. 436)

They face intense social pressure, particularly regarding societal expectations. While society assumes that a man's success at work naturally enhances his role as a husband, it often perceives a woman's success at work as coming at the expense of her duties as a wife and mother, leading her to continuously strive to prove otherwise.

A woman's employment, especially if it consumes most of her time and energy, may disrupt the required balance in marital relations. If work affects her emotional state and prevents her from fostering tranquility and affection in the marriage, this can lead to emotional detachment and the erosion of the marital bond. This phenomenon contributes to the rising divorce rates in families where the wife is employed. Furthermore, misconceptions about marital relationships can exacerbate the problem. A husband may feel that his wife is neglecting his needs, while the wife, having financial independence, may feel less reliant on her husband. This dynamic fosters the mistaken belief that the primary motivation for marriage is financial dependence, when in reality, marriage encompasses far more than economic support. (Kassir, 2019)

Additionally, a woman's employment imposes significant financial burdens on the family. Hiring nannies to care for children in the mother's absence increases household expenses, as does enrolling children in daycare centers. The cost of domestic workers responsible for cleaning and household chores further adds to the financial strain. For mothers with infants, purchasing formula milk to replace breastfeeding represents another expense. These financial obligations, often necessary to accommodate the demands of a working mother, place added pressure on the family's budget. (Farhat, 2012, p. 131)

B. The Negative Impact of a Wife's Employment on Children

One of the potential negative consequences of a wife's employment is the limited time available for child-rearing. The increased responsibilities of balancing work and family often lead to higher stress levels, making family conflicts more likely. A shortage of quality time with the husband and children inevitably affects family cohesion and may contribute to marital disputes, particularly regarding the unequal distribution of household responsibilities. (Farhat, 2012, p. 126)

A working mother finds herself caught between societal expectations of her traditional maternal role and the demands of her professional obligations. This dual burden affects the upbringing of children, particularly in terms of fulfilling their emotional needs. Parenting is not solely about providing food, clothing, and cleanliness—tasks that can be outsourced to domestic workers. Rather, it requires emotional presence, warmth, love, and security, which are essential for fostering a balanced and healthy personality in children. No nanny or caregiver can replace a mother in providing genuine emotional support, as the sincerity of maternal affection is unique to a mother-child bond. (Kassir, 2019)

C. The Negative Effects of Employment on the Working Woman Herself

Working women often experience physical and mental exhaustion due to demanding jobs, long hours, and work that requires significant physical effort. Over time, this may accelerate aging and increase the risk of chronic illnesses, ultimately affecting their overall well-being and quality of life. (Kassir, 2019)

D. The Negative Impact of Women's Employment on Society and Economic Balance

This aspect is complex and cannot be fully addressed here, as summarizing it inevitably oversimplifies the issue. However, it is worth noting that governments bear the responsibility of planning economic resources and ensuring fair income distribution. In many cases, a woman's decision to work stems from the husband's insufficient income rather than personal ambition.

Additionally, in an imbalanced labor market, women's entry into certain fields can intensify job competition, limit employment opportunities for men, and contribute to increased unemployment and lower wages. This occurs partly because some employers offer women lower salaries than men for the same work, further disrupting the economic equilibrium. However, this issue is not solely due to women's employment but arises from a combination of economic and social factors. (Kassir, 2019)

2.2 Section two: The Repercussions of a Wife's Employment on the Family

Repercussions refer to the widespread, indirect, or unexpected effects of an event. In this context, we discuss the unforeseen consequences of a wife's employment on her marital relationship and her children.

2.2.1 Subsection one : The Repercussions of a Wife's Employment on Marital Relationships

During a joint presentation by Professors Mahamadiya Iman and Bototon Salima on "Working Women and Family Relationships", held at the National Forum titled "Communication and Quality of Life in the Family", several crucial questions were raised regarding the impact of women's employment on family life. Some of these questions included: *How does a married woman's employment affect family dynamics? Does a wife's employment contribute to family distress or increase the likelihood of divorce? Do children with working mothers face a higher risk of behavioral issues? What is the nature of family relationships in households where the mother works?* (Mohamadia & Boutoutan, 2013, p. 4)

These questions primarily fall under the social aspect of family studies, but what concerns us most here is the relationship between a wife's employment and divorce. A wife's employment can be a direct or indirect cause of marital breakdown, with studies indicating a rise in divorce rates in some countries due to the pressures of modern life, including the demands of women's employment.

A wife's employment is a **direct cause** of divorce in cases where she files for separation based on Article 53, Clause 9 of the Family Law, which allows divorce if the husband fails to uphold a contractually agreed-upon condition regarding her work. Additionally, a husband may unilaterally initiate divorce if he perceives his wife's job as interfering with her marital and parental duties.

Alternatively, a wife may request *khul'* (a form of divorce where the wife initiates separation by offering compensation) if she feels her husband is financially dependent on her, has ulterior motives regarding her income, or is unwilling to contribute fairly to household expenses.

Employment can also be an **indirect cause** of divorce. In such cases, one spouse initiates divorce without explicitly stating that the wife's employment is the primary reason. For instance, a man may enter a marriage assuming that his working wife will share financial responsibilities. However, when he realizes that she maintains financial independence and does not contribute to household expenses as he expected, conflict arises. If the husband attempts to control her income or demands full financial participation, disputes may escalate, eventually leading to divorce.

Additionally, if the wife has a higher educational level or holds a more prestigious job than her husband, this may spark feelings of **jealousy, frustration, or resentment** in the husband. This emotional strain may manifest in negative or even abusive behavior, potentially leading to separation.

In such scenarios, the husband may file for divorce without admitting the true reason, instead fabricating other justifications to appear as the victim. Research conducted by Nye in 1980 found that marital disputes were more frequent in families where the wife worked. The study revealed that **60% of employed women had considered divorce, compared to 40% of non-working women**, indicating that housewives generally experienced greater marital harmony than working women. (Boumediene & Goudri, 2022, p. 436)

A working wife often struggles to juggle multiple responsibilities, including her job, household duties, and childcare. Workplace stress, conflicts with colleagues, and professional challenges further burden her. These pressures may affect her home life, causing tension and reducing her ability to create a harmonious marital environment. (Mohamadia & Boutoutan, 2013, p. 12). In extreme cases, the cumulative stress can lead to the dissolution of the marriage.

Another potential repercussion of a wife's employment is **marital infidelity**. This may occur in different ways:

- A. The wife may be exposed to inappropriate advances or temptations in the workplace, which—if coupled with weak moral restraint—could lead to infidelity.
- B. The husband may justify his own infidelity by claiming his wife’s frequent absences or emotional neglect due to work responsibilities.

In some cases, a husband may resort to **polygamy**, either with or without his wife’s knowledge, citing her inability to fulfill marital duties due to her job.

Lastly, a wife’s employment may **trigger jealousy in the husband**, particularly if she interacts frequently with male colleagues. This could lead to feelings of insecurity, suspicion, and increased marital conflicts. In some cases, this jealousy may spiral into an unhealthy, controlling dynamic that further strains the relationship.

2.2.2 Subsection two: The Repercussions of a Wife’s Employment on Children

With the increased participation of women in the workforce, family dynamics have shifted, particularly in childcare responsibilities. Many working mothers rely on daycare centers to look after their children during work hours, while others entrust their children to relatives, especially when holding prestigious or demanding positions.

A widely held belief suggests that prolonged separation from the mother during a child's early years is a major factor contributing to behavioral issues and delinquency. Studies have shown that the absence of married women from their homes for extended periods has led to a rise in cases of homeless and delinquent youth. (*Boumediene, 2022, p. 441*)

However -In my opinion- this belief is subject to debate. While some cases support the notion that maternal absence negatively impacts children, others contradict it, indicating that various factors contribute to a child's development. Nonetheless, it is essential to acknowledge the potential effects of a mother’s prolonged absence on her children’s emotional and psychological well-being.

On the other hand, children of working mothers may experience **a sense of pride** in their mother’s professional achievements. Often, a child's self-esteem is boosted by their mother’s employment, allowing them to proudly share her accomplishments with peers at school.

Despite the challenges, a mother’s employment does not always lead to negative outcomes for her children. The key factors influencing a child's well-being include the quality of parental involvement, the support system in place, and the mother's ability to balance her professional and familial responsibilities.

II. Conclusion:

In the spirit of fairness between men and women, Islam has granted women the right to work, allowing them to take on lawful occupations that align with their skills and do not contradict their natural roles. This right, however, is conditioned upon preserving their dignity, maintaining moral values, and ensuring that their work does not cause social or ethical harm or prevent them from fulfilling their duties towards their husband, children, and household.

Similarly, the law has reinforced a woman's right to work while also providing legal protections for working wives, such as the ability to include employment conditions in the marriage contract.

Through this study, we have concluded that a wife's employment outside the home is often a necessity in modern times—whether due to financial constraints or societal demands for female professionals in certain fields. Regardless of the reason, a woman's work has both positive and negative consequences, potentially affecting her, her marital relationship, and her children.

Key Findings

- The family is the cornerstone of society, and maintaining its stability requires joint efforts, especially when the wife is employed.
- Islam has honored women and placed the financial responsibility of the household on the husband, allowing the wife to focus on her role as a mother and spouse. However, when her employment becomes a necessity, she must adhere to ethical and religious guidelines.
- Prioritization, understanding responsibilities, and balancing work with family obligations are key to ensuring family stability.
- A wife's employment has both advantages and disadvantages, and overcoming the challenges depends on mutual understanding between spouses.
- Families in which the wife works outside the home face significant challenges, both in marital relationships and child-rearing.
- Divorce can result from various factors, and in some cases, a wife's employment may contribute to marital dissolution.

Recommendations

- Strengthening communication and understanding between spouses, discussing priorities and challenges together, and redistributing household responsibilities by encouraging husbands to participate in domestic duties.
- Encouraging couples to attend workshops on relationship development to improve communication and conflict resolution skills.
- Clearly defining employment-related expectations before marriage rather than merely including a work clause in the contract. Couples should discuss issues such as financial responsibilities, whether the wife will contribute to household expenses, and whether she will continue working after having children.
- Creating supportive and flexible work environments for married women, particularly in essential fields. This includes reducing working hours, enabling remote work, and providing daycare facilities near or within the workplace to allow mothers to stay close to their children when needed.
- Strengthening the rights and benefits of working mothers, particularly in maternity-related matters. A positive legislative step has been taken with the recent extension of maternity leave from three to six months. Further extensions should be considered for roles where replacements can be easily arranged, allowing new mothers adequate time to recover and care for their newborns.
- Managing time effectively between professional and family responsibilities, with priority given to family. Women should recognize that while employment can provide financial benefits and personal fulfillment, neglecting their marital and maternal duties carries greater consequences—both ethically and religiously.

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