

LIVING

Oh! The Difference in Days

by Fayza Haq

THE lifestyle in our parents' days certainly differed from that of ours. As a result of advancement of science and technology, our habits have changed. At the same time there is increase in crime rates and drug abuse. While the pattern of existence differs one will not sit judgement and say which days are better or worse.

While food like "bakarkhani" and "kebabs" were more authentic before, today we have cooking tips from all over the world in magazines. Chinese, European and fast foods are available in the city. The types of dessert and pastry available at shops have increased, while frozen and semi-cooked foods are also there.

Just as there is a rush for both western and exotic food so there is a desperate calculating of "balanced meals". Today people are on all sorts of diets varying from vegetarian to Pitikrin diets. Newspapers and magazines have regular articles to discourage you from gourmandising.

There is also the tremendous tendency to slim by going to the gym these days. While people succumbed to heart attacks and diabetes as a matter of course decades back, today people take up tennis and squash to keep trim. People jog in the morning or at least go in for regular morning or evening walks. Jane Fonda and her like have introduced the keep trim classes over the video and the women are falling for it. It has become the done thing to bring fruit and fruit juice for lunch. It is not only middle-aged women or women over thirties that are going to keep-trim classes but also teenagers and college going girls. The fashion is such that women have to be slim and young men too — or they would soon lose their girlfriends to some trim hunk.

In our parents' time there

was not the great drug abuse that we find today. Ever so often in the papers today you read about people at the ports trying to smuggle heroine, cocaine and such items. The actors, actresses along with singers and people in the entertainment would take to drugs as a fun thing and an escape from boredom, inadequacies and depression. The rich and the unemployed take it to amuse themselves. They even resort to crime, coming from poorer areas, to collect the drug money. In our parents' days drinking too much tea or smoking cigarettes was considered the limit. Nowadays even housewives take to drugs like "valium" and "librium" when they feel put out. Earlier life was less complicating and people tried to be content with whatever they had.

Just as the taking of drugs is seeing a gallop so has the crime rate shot up. When one reads the newspapers or listens to the news one is aware of it. There are international crime rings and there are many films, magazine articles and books on this. There were Sherlock Holmes and Agatha Christie books and films in our parents' days but now crimes are certainly meteoric. Similarly contraceptives flow free and magazines such as "Playboy" and "Hustler" are found in many select homes.

They had simple forms of entertainment in our parents' days. They went to beach on occasional weekends. All they did was swimming, while the children collected shells or tried to build sandcastles. There was always a hamper of goodies which contained roast chicken and "paratha". There was no question of surfing or sunbathing. Fathers carried their collection of magazines and poetry, books and smoked their pipes, while the children enjoyed themselves.

For other entertainment

they listened to the radio. Otherwise there was the record player with needles that had to be changed ever so often. Parents had their collection of records, which later included LPs. They listened to a lot of classical music and there was no mushrooming of pop concerts or fashion shows. Nor were there the numerous stage performances, film society arranged programmes on video clubs.

Whatever the British Council, USIS, Goethe Institut, Alliance Francaise or the Russian Cultural Centre arranged in way of cultural programmes such as piano concerts or a film like "War and Peace" was manna for them. There were at times the visiting cultural shows, magic shows and the circus. Fortunately a number of good foreign films made their entrance into the country and

this kept our parents fascinated. "Bulbul Academy", "Jago Art" and "Chhaya Naut" provided the only well-known steady local entertainment.

When the black and white TV was introduced many people bought it much later than their neighbours as they felt that this would disturb their children's education. There were not the numerous channels that we have today and there was no sitting and watching till late nights. The weekend TV play and earlier the weekly radio play was the endless source of pleasure along with the cricket commentary. Watching live football and cricket matches was their other pleasure. Photography and fishing were other outlets for them. As for our mothers, sewing, minute embroidery, crocheting, printing, pickling and making jams occupied their days.

With all the mixture of the good and evil, I am contented to be in my time just as my parents made the best with what was at hand in their days.



Bengalee Women Undergoing Changes

by Raffat Binte Rashid

SHE lined her large dressy eyes with kohl and covered her head with her green and red bordered saree's anchal.

That she is naive, thinks that the earth is flat, that there is an old woman in the moon spinning threads was the picture of a Bangladeshi woman in the past, but no more now. For better or worse, our women today have set a new face, entered a completely new phase. Wherever they live, city or a remote village or a mufasil town, the winds of change have touched them.

Not long ago, a village woman, pressing for her demands in a public rally was quite unimaginable, but that is the picture now.

Whatever her husband or father learned became her limits. Doing business or jobs, or talking to strangers for her was unthinkable. She would be an outcast in her society then. But in today's changing scenario she has taken a different, a more dominating role.

Work and business ventures have improved her economic and social status. She could finally break loose from the chains of tradition, superstition, and irrational fear. She is now, in fact everywhere — behind a computer, or executive desk or in a factory. She has an identity of her own.

But this is just the beginning of her revolution. There's a lot of hurdles to overcome before this male-dominated society recognises her. If a woman is more successful than her partner in professional life, she is bound to face numerous obstacles.

"You're my wife now, you should think before doing this or that," might be the husband's stern comments. But if he was doing the same job, "this or that" for him would have been normal and acceptable.

It is his chauvinism or his fear that make things complicated for him to accept. He wants to stay the boss at home



and at work.

He has few responsibilities for his woman just as the woman has for her man. It is also clearly written in the Quran, Islam's holy book, "To support her and shelter her", this responsibility is not superiority, just as her catering to his needs is no inferiority.

Besides, man and woman cannot exist they've been made complementary to each other. As the Quran reveals, "And of everything we have created pairs." But this characteristic of pairing in creation has been conveniently misunderstood and distorted.

It is only the women who can bear the future in her, but this, was always her weakness, that the men took advantage of. She never stood up and explained that there's no difference between a man and a woman except biological. And

this cannot be a reason for so much differences and discrimination.

Today women are aware of their rights and demand equal share, but equal rights, no matter how much they work for it, is hard to come by — unless there's change in her attitude and thought process.

Women believe that men are superior to them and they act accordingly. This has been in her, as part of history, culture and rearing. And so when a woman is seen in trousers, smoking publicly, the general reaction is a shock, but when a man with long hair with earring and chains is seen, it is nothing. Basically it is all the same in both cases: just a matter of habit and custom.

Similarly when a girl whistles back to those winks and cat calls, she cannot be pictured as someone vulgar. She

has merely given the eve-teasers a taste of their own medicine. This is her changing role now, she cannot just sit back and take the crap she's always been served. A female police officer is enough to punish any eve-teasers, she doesn't need her male colleagues to protect her. She should act like a law enforcing agent and not as a female only.

If she could come as far as the uniform, she could definitely perform her duty. A slight change in their consciousness and their thought process, their own attitudes towards themselves could bring women the equality they so demand.

They don't need to wear their hair short or use "Denim" cologne to be a feminist — just that attractive face with dreamy eyes and straight thoughts is enough to materialize their demands.

Beating Our Bad Moods

ultimately produce changes in our behaviour.

This type of therapy is often required in treating serious psychological problems. But for people with everyday emotional problems, the connection between body and emotions can work the other way around. Psychologists now believe that by behaving in certain ways we can change how we feel.

Some evidence has emerged for this. In course of research, some volunteers were asked to make six facial expressions, each signifying a specific emotion: surprise, disgust, sadness, anger, fear and happiness. Surprisingly, when the volunteers looked afraid, their bodies reacted as

by A SM Nurunnabi

if they were afraid. Their heart rates speeded up and their skin temperature dropped. In Varying degrees, the same thing happened with the other five emotions. When the volunteers simulated anger, for example, their heart rates and skin temperatures rose; with disgust, heart rates and skin temperatures dropped.

Many of us already apply this principle without realizing it. "Smile", we urge a tearful child and unwillingly the child smiles — and is cheered up.

How can we put this principle to work in our own life? There's more involved than simply mimicking a few expressions. We have to be systematic about it. Here is how:

a) Smile to cheer yourself up. But you shouldn't be half-hearted about it. A false smile — one that's too sudden, too brief, uses the mouth but not the eyes — doesn't convey or create happy feelings. So make a real effort. Start with a gentle smile, then slowly broaden it into a big, glowing grin. Next laugh. If you can't think of something funny, pretend. The key is to use this technique when you simply need a lift to get on with the day.

b) Reading aloud also helps. Read something that conveys a mood other than sadness.

c) One of the best ways to dispel gloom is to play a game or see a funny movie, and be sure to laugh out loud. It's not just the distraction that helps. Your own laughter will make

you feel better.

d) Look your best to increase your self-confidence. Research shows that looking good will make others readier to accept your message — but more important, it will also help you believe in yourself.

e) Keep cool in a crisis. Suppose you lose some important papers or your home is burgled. To remain calm, look calm. Keep your voice level, your speech crisp but unhurried. Panic is contagious; so is calmness.

Thus using our bodies and actions to change the way we feel can be a useful tool in helping us through life's difficult times. There is a saying that our deeds determine us, as much as we determine our deeds. People who remember that — and act upon it — can only be richer and happier for the experience.

COOKERY

Rich Scones

200g self-raising flour (8 oz)
1x2.5 ml spoon salt (½ tsp)
50g margarine (1½ oz)
25g sugar (1 oz)
50g currants or sultanas (2 tbsps)
1 egg beaten with 75 ml milk (1 egg and milk to make ¼ pt liquid)

Makes approx 10 scones
1. Mix flour and salt, rub in margarine.
2. Stir in sugar and fruit.
3. Add egg and milk, reserving a little for brushing the tops.
4. Knead lightly on a floured surface and roll out just over 1 cm in thickness.
5. Cut into rounds, re-roll the trimmings and cut more rounds.
6. Place on a greased baking tray and brush the tops with egg and milk.
7. Bake in a hot oven 220°C, 425°F. Gas mark 7 for about 10 mins.

Plain Scones

200g self-raising flour (8 oz)
1x2.5 ml spoon salt (½ tsp)
50g lard (1½ oz)
milk to make a soft dough

Make and bake as Rich Scones.
Makes approx 10 scones.
Ideal with strawberry jam and cream teas.



Krutika Desai and Nisha Singh in "Manasi"



Archana Puransingh in "Lux Kya Scene Hai"

Of Marriage and Divorce

by Farhana Ahmad

have the courage to disperse with a ruined marriage. Or have they?

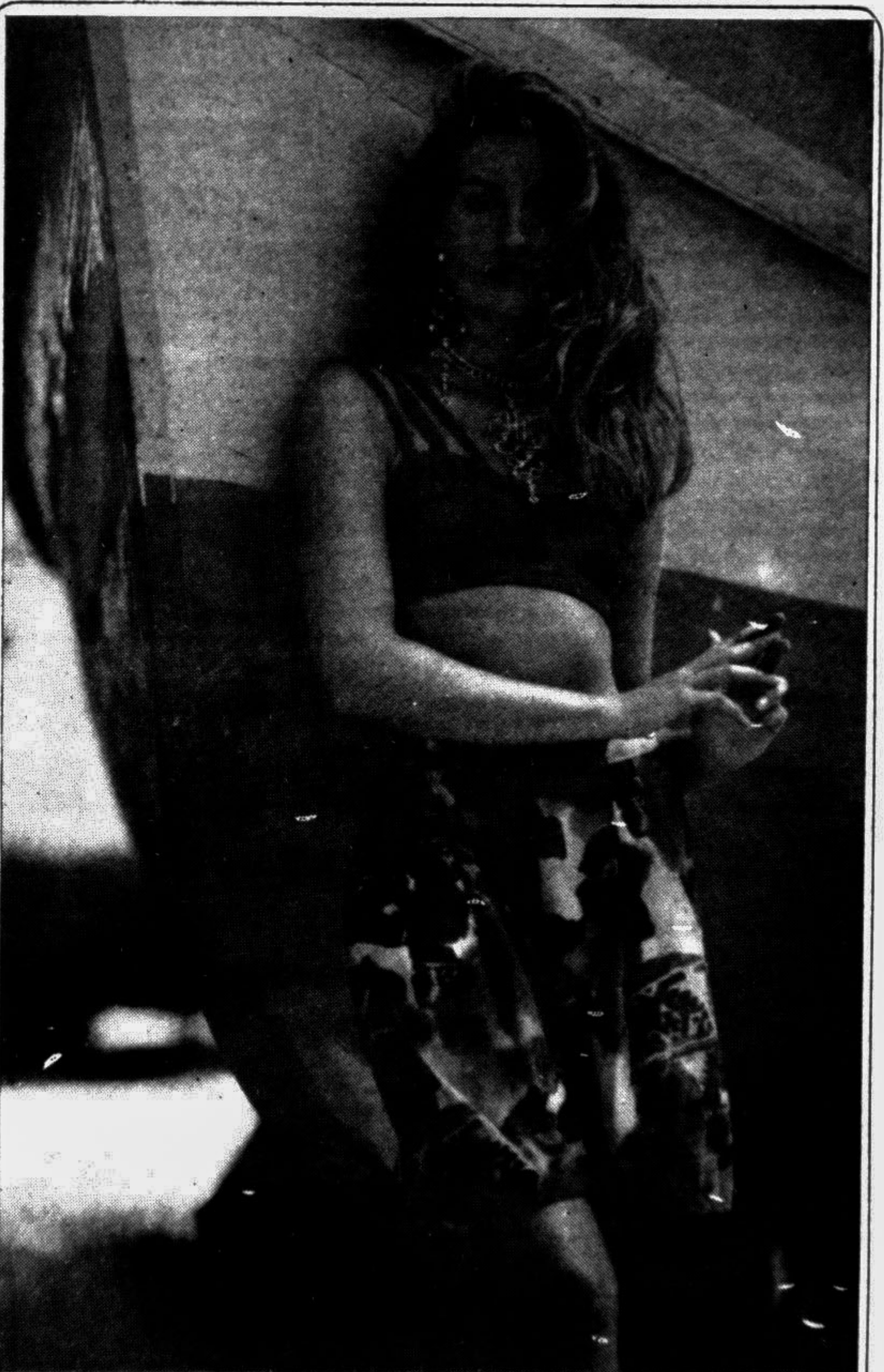
What are today's women thinking on marriage and divorce? Surprisingly most of today's young women interviewed felt that marriage was for better or worse and they would stay with their husbands come hell or high water. One thing these women had in common was that they all treated divorce as a last resort, and would rather not have to go into it. They felt separation was a lot better than going into the ultimate, Jhumu, a student, however, felt that if the marriage was childless she would rather go for divorce provided there was no chance of the marriage ever improving. Laz, also a student and a young mother of a four-month old, said that she would try her utmost to make the marriage work and not go for divorce. But if the husband was lacking

in character then children or no children she would opt for divorce right away.

On the question of divorce, she felt it was all right if there were no children but if there were children then no matter how bad the marriage was, with no chance of recovery whatsoever, still she would rather go for separation for the sake of the children. Sheela, a student, felt that she could never condone herself doing something so ultimate. She said she would try her hardest to make her marriage work. If things got seriously out of hand she felt she would go for separation, but never divorce. Apu, a young married woman, felt she would think of divorce only if the marriage was disastrous and totally unable to be borne and there were no children. But if there were children she too would rather go for separation. Mithu and Minu were also of the same opinion.

These young people of today had nothing against marriage and felt that everyone should get married. Jhumu, though felt there was no such necessity and a woman could survive just as well.

Though attitudes to divorce seem to have changed radically and many feel it's the best step of the marriage has broken down totally. However, most women would rather not go into it. Why do they feel like this? Is it our staunch religious upbringing? Is it that we were brought up thinking marriage was for all times? Is it that we sacrifice ourselves for our children and cannot fear for them to suffer the trauma of their parents being divorced? Is it because we don't like to bring shame to our parents? Or simply because we cannot bear rejection by the society? Whatever may be the cause we can thankfully say even the women of today believe in the sanctity of marriage and are not as blasé as the westerners to jump into divorce at the drop of a hat.



BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL

British Fashion Shot on Location in Barbados

An amazing colour match with a bright boat at Oistins on the south coast of Barbados, with a tangerine coloured lycra top by Chrissie Walsh, multicoloured shorts by Hobbs and Jewellery by Jaqueline Welford.

Chrissie Walsh continues to exploit the qualities of the fabric of the 90's, lycra, and with clever seams makes the ultimate stretch fabric appear stiffly structured. Shorts continue to be an essential garment whether tight and skimpy or soft and long like these culottes, cut from the distinctive rich shades of the Hobbs colour way.

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