

BERGER**WHAT'S IN?***Paint Your Imagination*

Clothes with subtle and earthier tones... after the frazzles and dazzling of the Eid clothes, try taking it easy on the colours.

Lifestyle

BERGER*Paint Your Imagination***WHAT'S OUT!**

Lethargy... Ramadan is gone, so no more excuses of dizziness, dehydration and the likes. Get back to work!

fathering: changing roles

A page in the life of a young mother: struggle out of bed at the crack of dawn; organise tiffin boxes and breakfast for the children and husband; get the children ready for school; drop them to school or the bus stop. Rush back to give the husband breakfast and see him off to work; and if lucky, go to a part time or full time job; if not, do the groceries, or have the luxury to read a book; go on to organise/cook lunch; pick up the children, serve lunch; if possible take a nap. As dusk sets in, take the children to the playground or the club for sports. Dinner is next on the agenda followed by bedtime stories. By the end of the day she is completely on her knees.

And what about the endless amount of ferrying children back and forth for music, dance, art and birthday parties?

And so it goes on. Life revolves around the little children. Day after day of the same routine can wear out the nerves of even the most stoic of women. Added to that, is the feeling of loneliness, emptiness and frustration. What's worse is that there is often there is only a little help coming from fathers.

Many women complain that the fathers don't keep track of the homework or are clueless about parent-teacher meetings or their children's classes. Recalls one mother: "I would like to forget



those early days. There was a tremendous amount of friction and had it not been for the support of my parents with childcare I am sure I would have headed for a divorce."

It is particularly hard on a working woman. Unable to juggle so many roles, many put their careers on the back burner

or at best opt for part time jobs.

So where do the fathers come in? In the early years says many a mother, the father's role is limited though they might occasionally pitch in to change diapers, feed the baby and rock the little ones to sleep.

Later fathers may take part in school

activities, help with homework, and play with the child. One such father is the parent of a 13-year-old boy and a 12-year-old daughter. "Though my wife, a former employee in a software organisation in the US, remains a central figure in bringing up the kids, I like to attend all school functions and play golf and foot-

ball with my daughter and son," he says.

In fact as the children grow older it is the father who plays the role model to the children. While multi-tasking comes naturally to women, the men have to make adjustments to meet the pressing needs of child rearing.

Just as women do not wish to miss the joys of motherhood, some fathers want to be there for their children to the extent possible.

If fathers have become more hands on, it is because of the realisation that the first three-four years are critical to the development of a child. With a transformation from the nuclear to single families, men persevere unless they are out and out chauvinists to have to do their bit.

Long distance fathers not only fail to enjoy the miracle of birth or their baby's first words, but miss out on bonding also.

In the long run, it is largely the mother who bears the brunt of child rearing. However, thankfully at least in our part of the world women do it gracefully. As one young mother says, "I feel that someone has to hold the family together and that is my job."

By Kavita Charanji

Photo: Zahedul I Khan

Model: Ishtiaque Reza and Zareen Rafa



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