

Young people should help out

MORE AT HOME

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Imagine it is the day of Eid. Your house is in pristine condition, the floors sparkling and an endless stream of mouth-watering dishes being brought out from the kitchen and set onto the dining table. The picturesque setting looks like something out of a movie, a perfect backdrop to your Eid pictures. But have you ever stopped to notice all the work that goes behind keeping such an immaculate house?

Holidays are meant to be a time of relaxation, yet, due to the enormous task load of cooking, cleaning, serving guests, and decorating that accompanies the festivities, most people spend the entirety of their holiday toiling away to make sure all the tasks are getting done.

On occasions like Eid, young people are usually let off the hook and are able to spend their holidays going out, meeting friends – all at the expense of the adults in the family and the domestic help staying at home to fulfil their duties. With Eid coming up in a few days, it is important we acknowledge the disparity in the division of household chores within a family.

Traditionally, the burden of household chores falls upon the shoulders of the older members of the family, or, more often than not, on their domestic help. Most children are not expected to contribute at home with daily chores and are raised to be heavily reliant on others for simple domestic tasks. Especially in extended families, the importance of equally divided responsibility and learning to contribute to your household is overlooked in favour of children focusing solely on their education.



PHOTOS: **ORCHID CHAKMA**



This phenomenon only increases when it comes to holidays and vacations, such as Ramadan and Eid. Everybody would love to spend their vacations resting and enjoying themselves, and young people are especially prone to use this time to catch up on much-needed sleep and take a break from their academic and extracurricular obligations. However, adults also need and deserve the breathing space to distance themselves from their jobs and responsibilities.

In families where both parents and most of its members work nine-to-five jobs, finding the energy to come home to prepare meals and clean after their children is particularly demanding. During Ramadan, as soon as they return home, parents begin cooking and serving *iftar*, and are also the ones who normally clean up afterwards. And so, when the adults find no respite even during Eid,

it becomes imperative for the younger ones to take a step back and re-establish certain dynamics.

Furthermore, given the status quo of our country and the long-standing cultural backdrop, a disproportionate number of chores often fall on the women in the families. More often than not, it is the mothers, grandmothers or aunts who take on the responsibility of keeping the house in order, and are the ones who have to compromise their holidays for the sake of others without complaints. For younger children, the mothers are chiefly the ones who have to accompany them to friends' houses and sacrifice their time to do so.

Such cases are inherently unfair to all members of a family. If young people can enjoy their opportunity to relax, shouldn't the others be able to as well? Instead, if children take the decision to balance their time by helping

out at home with simple chores like cutting fruit or serving the guests, a heavy load could be taken off the others.

Doing so would not only alleviate some of the pressure the others feel, but also allow them to forge stronger bonds with their family. Contributing to chores is not only about getting work done; it is about learning how to empathise with others and understand the effort put into each little detail. Young people can take the time they would spend lazing around and spend it getting to know their parents or grandparents better over stirring a pot of *haleem* or chopping up vegetables for garnish.

Children are also integral members of their family. Thus, they have some responsibility towards maintaining their possessions and living spaces that they can be expected to commit to. Carrying out a few basic chores, like cleaning up after themselves and making sure their rooms are organised should not be considered a favour, but a natural obligation. It teaches them to be grateful and diligent, and they are able to gain a sense of responsibility from the experience

Gradually learning to complete their own chores over a long vacation can also help young people consistently incorporate their duties into their regular busy lives. Holidays give them the time and opportunity to learn to manage their time better while getting everything done in the same instance. Being less reliant on others when it comes to small tasks can greatly boost their confidence and independence while severely reducing the pressure it puts on others.

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