

## RE-APPRAISING THE ROLES OF PARENTS IN A CHILD'S LIFE FOR PARENTAL APPRECIATION AND SOCIETAL STABILITY IN SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA: AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES

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### ABSTRACT

The significance of parents' roles in shaping their children's lives and fostering a stable society has led many modern societies to establish special days to honour and celebrate parents. Interestingly, the emphasis on parental appreciation has its roots in Islam, which institutionalised parental roles in equitable terms to achieve a balanced society. However, recent trends have significantly deviated from this balance. This paper re-examined the roles of parents in a child's life in south-west Nigeria from Islamic perspective, employing a qualitative methodology. Through content analysis, the Quran and *Aḥādīth* (sayings of Prophet Muḥammad SAW), extant relevant literature, and semi-structured interviews with Muslim parents and some children were analysed, supplemented by data from media platforms. Drawing

on attachment and *Tarbiyah* (Islamic nurturing) theories, this paper revealed that the shared and complementary roles of parents, as prescribed by Islam for children's upbringing and societal stability, are increasingly compromised in contemporary times. This erosion often stems from issues such as broken homes, ultimately denying some parents, especially fathers, celebration or appreciation from their children due to their absence from their lives. The paper recommended that, among other things, Islamic institutions, scholars, and clerics, should regularly counsel and sensitise Muslims on the importance of adhering to parental roles prescribed by Islam. The paper concluded that when parents fulfil their complementary roles, society becomes more stable, and parents are likely to receive balanced appreciation and celebration from their children and society for their contributions, unlike contemporary trends that often disproportionately celebrate mothers over fathers.

**Keywords:** children; Islam; parental roles; stability; Southwest Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

The importance of parents in a child's life cannot be overstated. The term "parents" refers to mothers and fathers,<sup>1</sup> who give birth to and are expected to raise, care for, and significantly influence a child's physical, emotional, psychological, and social development.<sup>2</sup> A combination of psychological and sociological constructs shows that a child refers to a young human being, typically from birth to puberty or adolescence, who

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<sup>1</sup> A. S. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, ninth ed, (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2015), 1118.

<sup>2</sup> Siti Yumnah, "The Role of Parents on the Forming of Children's in the Family: The Thematic Hadith Study," *Lisan Al-Hal: Jurnal Pengembangan Pemikiran dan Kebudayaan* 16, no. 2 (2022):195.

is dependent on adults for care, support, and guidance as they grow and develop physically, emotionally, and cognitively.<sup>3</sup> The important roles of parents in a child's life have prompted the designation of special days to celebrate parents for their contributions to societal stability and development.

Presently, Mother's Day, International Women's Day, and International Day of the Girl Child are celebrated annually in many countries to honour, support, and empower the female gender. Inspired by the celebrations of the female gender, Father's Day, International Men's Day, and the International Day of the Boy Child are also observed annually, to celebrate men's positive contributions to the society, promotes positive masculinity, and also raise awareness and address the challenges associated with the male gender.<sup>4</sup>

While the modern phenomenon of celebrating parents originated from the West in the early 20th century, in response to the deplorable situation of women,<sup>5</sup> Islam had already liberated and honoured women, granting them equal and equitable rights comparable to those of men.<sup>6</sup> In recognition of their biological makeup, Islam equitably defined women's roles in relation to men, particularly as spouses, to foster effective family

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<sup>3</sup> Rachita Bisht, "Who is a Child? The Adults' Perspective within Adult-child Relationship in India," *Interpersona* 2, no.2 (2008): 152-153.

<sup>4</sup> F. O. Abulude, I. A. Abulude, I. A. Gbotoso, and S. O. Ademilua, "International Men's Day: The Awareness, Significance, Challenges, and Logo Design Proposal," *International Journal of Design* 2, no. 7 (2022): 14.

<sup>5</sup> James M. Henslin, *Sociology: A Down-to-Earth Approach*, (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1999), 292.

<sup>6</sup> Sikiru Eniola, "Feminism, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Islamic Traditions," in *Correlates of Islam*, ed. Ishaq Akintola, Badmus O. Yusuf & T. M. Salisu, (Zaria: The Ahmadu University Press Limited, 2009), 172-173; Rafatu Abdulhamid, "Fundamental Human Rights of Women: Islamic Panacea for Rights Abuses in Nigeria," in *Dynamics of Islamic Studies among World Disciplines: A Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ishaq Lakin Akintola*, ed. Salisu, T. M & Paramole, K. O, (Ikeja: M-Class Publishers, 2018), 158-162.

management and societal stability.<sup>7</sup> These divinely instituted parental roles, underscore Islam's emphasis on honouring parents at all times, rather than confining celebration to a specific day or period.

Globally, there is increasing recognition of parents' roles and awareness of challenges facing children, such as lack of access to education, child marriage, and child negligence. These issues are often highlighted on November 20, International Children's Day, as they can lead to societal instability. Given the crucial contributions parents make to stability through child-rearing, this paper, from an Islamic perspective, finds it essential to re-appraise the roles of parents in shaping children's lives and contributing to societal stability in south-west Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY AND THORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The paper employs a qualitative methodology, utilising content analysis of relevant books, journal articles, and semi-structured interviews with ten (10) Muslim families – husbands and wives – (respondents) in southwest Nigeria, supplemented by data from internet and media platforms. The respondents were asked questions related to their occupations, work period, and parental roles. The relevance of this is to deduce the extent to which the Muslim parental roles in southwest Nigeria align with the teachings of Islam or otherwise. Also, fourteen (14) out of 7,200 similar comments of individuals (all of whom are south-west/Yoruba people) on a social media post pertaining to parental negligence and its consequences were highlighted and analysed. The relevance of this is to establish reasons children appreciate their parents or otherwise. The two categories of responses strengthen the analysis of this paper. They provide insights into problems associated with child upbringing and parental roles, especially among Muslims in southwest Nigeria. They also give a clear direction towards pragmatic and sustainable policy recommendations, ensuring parents' roles in a child's life are appreciated and societal stability is ensured.

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<sup>7</sup> 'Abdul-Qaer Ahmad 'Atta, *Marriage Relationship of Spouses in the Light of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah*, trans. J. A. Hybah, (Beirūt: Dār Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyyah, 2012), 48-49.

Drawing on attachment theory and *Tarbiyah* (Islamic nurturing). Attachment theory, developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth, argues that early relationships between children and their caregivers (e.g. parents) significantly influence children's attachment styles, which in turn affect their future relationships, emotional regulation, and overall well-being.<sup>8</sup> The concept of *Tarbiyah* emphasises the importance of nurturing children's holistic development, encompassing spiritual, emotional, moral, and intellectual growth, based on the Qur'ān and *Aḥādīth* (sayings) of Prophet Muḥammad SAW.<sup>9</sup> These two theories are relevant in understanding that parents, as primary educators and caregivers, play pivotal roles in shaping a children's holistic development.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The issue of parental roles in a child's life from Islamic perspectives has attracted numerous scholarly examinations, particularly in Nigeria. Numerous studies have examined the Islamic approach, principles, and importance of child upbringing, emphasising areas concerning the mother, such as breastfeeding, moral, spiritual, emotional and intellectual development, as essential to both a child's development and the well-being of the larger society.<sup>10</sup> Some other works identified the prevalence

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<sup>8</sup> Susanne M. Jones, "Attachment Theory," in *The International Encyclopedia of Interpersonal Communication*, ed. Charles R. Berger and Michael E. Roloff, (John Wiley & Sons, 2016), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Mohamad Abdallah, "Exploring Tarbiyah in Islamic Education: A Critical Review of the English-and Arabic Language Literature," *Education Sciences* 15, no.5 (2025), 14-16.

<sup>10</sup> I. L., Akintola, "Breastfeeding, Child Care and Child Education: Sine Qua Non for Positive Child Development in Islām," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo, (National Association for the Study of Religions and Education (NASRED), 2005), 15-32; N. O. Junaid-Eko, "Education: The Fundamental Right of a Child in Islām," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo, (NASRED, 2005), 47-54; Salahudeen, M. A. "Islam and Child Upbringing," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo (NASRED, 2005), 186-193; S. A. Saula, and M. A. Balogun, "The Islamic Importance of Home Training," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo (NASRED, 2005), 78-

of poverty and excessive materialism among some parents, broken homes, poor family planning, and lack of family values as some of the problems associated with child upbringing in Nigeria.<sup>11</sup> Adegoke argues that, as a religious duty, Islam enjoins parents to provide their children with good education, thereby averting the adverse effects, such as moral decadence, juvenile delinquency, and death associated with faulty parental upbringing.<sup>12</sup>

While the above works generally focus on the importance and the problems associated with child upbringing in Islam, Paramole and Tijani examine the challenges confronting Muslim communities regarding girl-child education, using Badagry division of Lagos State as a case study.<sup>13</sup> They argue that parents should strike a balance between boy-child and girl-child education, as the latter is also crucial for societal stability and development. Additionally, Paramole contends that parents have the

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81; G. O. Olaogun, "The Mother's Position in the Child Education Programmes of Islam," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo, (NASRED, 2005), 90-98; J. I. Bello, "Islamic Approach to Children Upbringing: The Adolescent in Focus," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo (NASRED, 2005), 107-15; S. Sheu, "Child Upbringing: Islamic Perspective," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, and R. I. Adebayo (NASRED, 2005), 208-15.

<sup>11</sup> Kazeem A. Adegoke, "Problem of Child Upbringing in Nigeria: Islamic Perspective," in *Religion and Child Development*, ed. M. A. Folorunsho, I. O. Oyeneye, & R. I. Adebayo (NASRED, 2005), 153-62; A. A. Akanni, "Dangers in the Muslim Home: Cultural and Civilisation Challenges to Islamic Marriages in Southwestern Nigeria," in *Correlates of Islam*, ed. Ishaq Akintola, Badmus O. Yusuf, and T. M. Salisu (Zaria: The Ahmadu University Press Limited, 2009), 97-121; S. O. Uthman, "Fasāid (Unethical Behaviours) among Muslim Youth in Lagos Mainland Local Government: Causes, Effects and solutions" (Master's thesis, Lagos State University, 2010); K. O. Paramole and M. O. Sanni, "An Assessment of Women's Rights in Islam: Lessons for Contemporary Marital Challenges in Lagos, Nigeria," *LASU Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2020): 63-77.

<sup>12</sup> K. A. Adegoke, "Place of Muslim Women under the *Shari'ah* and Modern Societal Challenges," in *Correlates of Islam*, ed. Ishaq Akintola, Badmus O. Yusuf, and T. M. Salisu (Zaria: The Ahmadu University Press, 2009), 208-17.

<sup>13</sup> K. O. Paramole and S. O. Tijani, "Challenges Confronting Muslim Communities on Girl-Child Education in Badagry Division of Lagos State," *LASU Journal of Religions and Peace Studies* 4, no. 1 (2020): 62-74.

responsibility to nurture their children on the paths of Prophet Dāwud and Sulayman, who exemplified wisdom, piety, knowledge, honesty, and patience, as a means to build an egalitarian, corruption-free, and peaceful society.<sup>14</sup> It is evident from the foregoing that while numerous studies have explored parental roles in a child's life from an Islamic perspective, the focus has primarily been on the methods, importance, and challenges of child upbringing. However, there is a notable gap in examining how the dynamics of these roles impact parents' celebration, honour, or otherwise in contemporary times.

## STATUS AND ROLES OF PARENTS IN ISLAM

In various verses of the Quran and *Aḥādīth*, the status and roles of parents are explicitly highlighted. In Surah Isrā verses 23-24 and Surah Luqmān verses 13, Allah says that:

وَقَضَىٰ رَبُّكَ أَلَّا تَعْبُدُوا إِلَّا إِيَّاهُ وَبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا ۖ إِنَّمَا يُبَلِّغَنَّ عَنْكَ  
الْكِبَرَ أَحَدُهُمَا أَوْ كِلَاهُمَا فَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا أُفٍّ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا  
قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا (23) وَأَخْفِضْ لَهُمَا جَنَاحَ الذُّلِّ مِنَ الرَّحْمَةِ وَقُلْ رَبِّ  
ارْحَمْهُمَا كَمَا رَبَّيَانِي صَغِيرًا (24)

*Meaning: And your Lord (Allah) has decreed that you should not worship (any) except Him, and to parents, good treatment. Whether one or both of them reach old age [while] with you, say not to them [so much as], 'uff,' (a word of contempt) and do not repel them but speak to them a noble word (23). And lower to them the wing of humility out of mercy and say, 'My Lord, have mercy upon them as they brought me up [when I was] small.'*

<sup>14</sup> K. O. Paramole, "Family as Bedrock to a Corrupt Free Nation: Prophets Dawud and Sulayman as Models," in *Islam and the Contemporary Nigerian Society*, (IKeja: Mumtaz Publishers, 2022), 39-57.

(Surah Isrā 17: 23-24)

وَوَصَّيْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ بِوَلَدَيْهِ حَمَلَتْهُ أُمُّهُ وَهْنًا عَلَى وَهْنٍ وَفِصْلُهُ فِي عَامَيْنِ  
أَنْ أَشْكُرَ لِي وَلَوْلَايَكَ إِلَيَّ الْمَصِيرُ

*Meaning: And We (Allah) have enjoined upon man [care] for his parents. His mother carried him, [increasing her] in weakness upon weakness, and his weaning is in two years. Be grateful to Me (Allah) and to your parents; to Me is the [final] destination.*

(Surah Luqmān 31: 13)

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, it is recorded that:

حَدَّثَنَا قُتَيْبَةُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ، حَدَّثَنَا جَرِيرٌ، عَنْ عُمَارَةَ بْنِ الْقُعْقَاعِ بْنِ  
شُبْرُمَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي زُرْعَةَ، عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ. رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ. قَالَ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ  
إِلَى رَسُولِ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحَقُّ  
بِحُسْنِ صَحَابَتِي قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ ثُمَّ  
مَنْ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ ثُمَّ مَنْ قَالَ "أُمُّكَ". قَالَ ثُمَّ أَبُوكَ "

*Meaning: Qutaybah ibn Sa'īd narrated to us, Jarīr narrated to us, from 'Umārah ibn al-Qa'qā' ibn Shubrumah, from Abū Zur'ah, from Abū Hurayrah that "A man came to Allah's Messenger SAW and said, "O Allah's Messenger SAW! Who is more entitled to be treated with the best companionship by me?" The Prophet SAW said, "Your mother." The man said, "Who is next?" The Prophet said, "Your mother." The man further said, "Who is next?" The Prophet SAW said, "Your mother." The man asked for the fourth*



*time, "Who is next?" The Prophet SAW said, "Your father."*<sup>15</sup>

(Sahīh al-Bukhārī)

The above Quranic verses and *ḥadīth* emphasise the importance of treating parents with kindness and gratitude, acknowledging the sacrifices they endure for their child's well-being and upbringing, especially the mother, during pregnancy, childbirth, and nurturing. Tsabary aptly noted that:

*"Both parents undergo a transformation in their identities during the years of raising children. However, for women the parenting journey holds an especially emotional and spiritual significance because we (women) house this growing child within our body for the first nine months of its existence."*<sup>16</sup>

The emphasis on the mother reflects Islam's recognition of the biological, physical, and psychological burdens women endure during pregnancy and childcare, not because the father is exempted from responsibilities, but because he also shares the burden of providing for the mother and child's financial needs. In a *ḥadīth*, although categorised as *ḍaif* (weak), Prophet Muḥammad SAW said: *إِنَّمَا النِّسَاءُ شَفَائِقُ الرِّجَالِ* "Women are the counterparts of men,"<sup>17</sup> highlighting the complementary nature and roles of men and women.<sup>18</sup> In Islam, the position of parents is sacred and honoured next to the worship of Allah, and this is basically because of their roles as fathers and mothers as mentioned, for example, in *Sūratun-*

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<sup>15</sup> Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ju'fī al-Bukhārī, *The Translation of the Meanings of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Arabic-English*, trans. Muhammad Muhsin Khan, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), *Ḥadīth* no. 5971, 8: 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> Shefali Tsabary, *The Conscious Parent: Transforming Ourselves Empowering our Children*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2014), 118.

<sup>17</sup> Abū Dāūd, *English Translation of Sunan Abū Dawūd*, trans. Yaser Qadhi, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008), 152-53.

<sup>18</sup> Abdul Ghaffar Hasan, *The Rights & Duties of Women in Islam*, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2004), 7.

*n-Nisāi* verse 34 and *Sūratul Baqarah* verse 233, and some *Aḥādīth* quoted below:

الرِّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ بِمَا فَضَّلَ اللَّهُ بَعْضَهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ وَبِمَا  
أَنْفَقُوا مِنْ أَمْوَالِهِمْ ۚ فَالصَّالِحَاتُ قَانِتَاتٌ حَافِظَاتٌ لِّلْغَيْبِ بِمَا حَفِظَ  
اللَّهُ ۚ

*Meaning: Men are in charge of women by [right of] what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend [for maintenance] from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard.*

(Surah al-Nisā 4:34)

وَالْوَالِدَاتُ يُرْضِعْنَ أَوْلَادَهُنَّ حَوْلَيْنِ كَامِلَيْنِ ۖ لِمَنْ أَرَادَ أَنْ يُنِمَّ  
الرِّضَاعَةَ ۚ وَعَلَى الْمَوْلُودِ لَهُ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكِسْوَتُهُنَّ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ لَا تُكَلَّفُ  
نَفْسٌ إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا ۚ لَا تُضَارَّ وَالِدَةٌ بِوَلَدِهَا وَلَا مَوْلُودٌ لَهُ بِوَلَدِهِ ۚ وَعَلَى  
الْوَارِثِ مِثْلُ ذَلِكَ ۚ فَإِنْ أَرَادَا فِصَالًا عَنْ تَرَاضٍ مِّنْهُمَا وَتَشَاوُرٍ فَلَا  
جُنَاحَ عَلَيْهِمَا ۚ وَإِنْ أَرَدْتُمْ أَنْ تَسْتَرْضِعُوا أَوْلَادَكُمْ فَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ  
إِذَا سَلَّمْتُمْ مَا آتَيْتُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ  
بَصِيرٌ

*Meaning: And the mothers should breastfeed their children for two complete years for whoever wishes to complete the nursing [period]. Upon the father is the mothers' provision and their clothing according to what is acceptable. No person is charged with more than his capacity. No mother should be harmed*

*through her child, and no father through his child. And upon the [father's] heir is [a duty] like that [of the father]. And if they both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them. And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable. And fear Allah and know that Allah is Seeing of what you do.*

(Surah al-Baqarah 2:233)

In *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Ja'far ibn Muḥammad, reported on the authority of his father, Muḥammad ibn 'Alī (Muḥammad al-Bāqir), that the Prophet addressed them (in his farewell sermon) that:

فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ فِي النِّسَاءِ فَإِنَّكُمْ أَخَذْتُمُوهُنَّ بِأَمَانٍ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاسْتَحْلَلْتُمْ فُرُوجَهُنَّ  
بِكَلِمَةِ اللَّهِ وَلَكُمْ عَلَيْهِنَّ أَنْ لَا يُوطِئَنَّ فُرُشَكُمْ أَحَدًا تَكْرَهُونَهُ . فَإِنْ  
فَعَلْنَ ذَلِكَ فَاضْرِبُوهُنَّ ضَرْبًا غَيْرَ مُبْرِحٍ وَهُنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ رِزْقُهُنَّ وَكَسْوَتُهُنَّ  
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَقَدْ تَرَكْتُمْ فِيكُمْ مَا لَنْ تَضِلُّوا بَعْدَهُ إِنْ اعْتَصَمْتُمْ بِهِ  
كِتَابَ اللَّهِ

*Meaning: Fear Allah regarding women, for you have taken them as trusts from Allah, and intimacy with them has become permissible to you through the word of Allah. You have rights over them, and they have rights over you. Your rights over them are that they should not allow anyone you dislike to tread on your bedding, and they should not commit any open indecency. If they do, then Allah has permitted you to admonish them, abandon them in beds, and beat them, but not severely. If they abstain, then they have their rights to be provided for and clothed in kindness. I*

*have left among you something which, if you adhere to it, you will never go astray: the Book of Allah.*<sup>19</sup>

(Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim)

The Prophet SAW also said to Hind bint ‘Utbah – the wife of Abu Sufyan – who had complained that he did not spend on her: *خُذِي مَا يَكْفِيكَ وَوَلَدَكَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ* "Take what is sufficient for you and your children, on a reasonable basis."<sup>20</sup> He also said that: *أَكْمَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ إِيمَانًا* "The believers who show the most perfect faith are those who have the best behaviour, and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives."<sup>21</sup> In another report, the Prophet SAW said: *أَفْضَلُ دِينَارٍ يُنْفَقُهُ الرَّجُلُ دِينَارٌ يُنْفَقُهُ عَلَى عِيَالِهِ* "The most excellent dinar is one that a person spends on his family."<sup>22</sup> Ibn ‘Umar also reported that the Prophet SAW said:

*كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ، وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ، وَالْأَمِيرُ رَاعٍ، وَالرَّجُلُ رَاعٍ عَلَى أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ؛ وَالْمَرْأَةُ رَاعِيَةٌ عَلَى بَيْتِ زَوْجِهَا وَوَلَدِهِ، فَكُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ*<sup>23</sup>

*Meaning: Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock. The leader is a shepherd, and a man is a shepherd over his household; and a*

<sup>19</sup> Abū al-Ḥusayn Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj ibn Muslim ibn Ward al-Qushayrī an-Naysābūrī, *English Translation of Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab, vol. 3 (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), 349-350, Ḥadīth no. 2950/1218.

<sup>20</sup> An-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ Al-Ṣālīh*, 435.

<sup>21</sup> An-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ Al-Ṣālīh*, 125.

<sup>22</sup> An-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ Al-Ṣālīh*, 127.

<sup>23</sup> Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash‘ath ibn Ishāq al-Azdī al-Sijistānī, *English Translation of Sunan Abū Dāwūd*, trans. Nasiruddin Al-Khattab, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008), Ḥadīth no. 2928, 3: 452.

*woman is a shepherdess over the house of her husband and his children. So each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock (subjects).*

(Sunan Abī Dāwūd)

It can be inferred from the aforementioned Quranic verses and *Aḥādīth* that the roles of fathers and mothers are complementary in Islam. Typically, the father serves as the provider, ensuring shelter, clothing, food, and protection, while also playing a significant role in religious affairs and overall well-being.<sup>24</sup> Conversely, the mother acts as the primary educator for children and is fundamentally responsible for managing the household and nurturing them<sup>25</sup> with her biological makeup suited for her role as a homemaker.<sup>26</sup> Thus, in Islam, parents are expected to collaborate in nurturing their children and building a harmonious family that may lead to stable society, guided by kindness and compassion.<sup>27</sup> It has been aptly noted that: "No matter what the nature, attributes, and disposition of an innocent child may be at birth, the impacts and influence of his/her parental care and attitudes may transform the child into a better or worse human being."<sup>28</sup> This underscores the importance of parents taking full responsibility for their children from childhood, setting a righteous example for them to emulate, and thereby shaping their interactions with both parents and society.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Majdi Muhammad Ash-Shahāwī, *Marital Discord: Causes & Cures* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2001), 76; Hassan Ayyoub, *Fiqh of the Muslim Family: A Manual Book in Islamic Jurisprudence*, trans. Al-Falah, (Cairo: Darussalam, 2008), 353.

<sup>25</sup> Adegoke, "Muslim Women," 210.

<sup>26</sup> Hasan, *Women in Islam*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Aliyu, *Women's Rights*, 49.

<sup>28</sup> Abdur-Razaq A. Alaro, "Moral Upbringing in Islam," in *The Luminescent Path*, ed. A. Odeyemi (Ilorin: Al-Bayan, MSSN UNILORIN Branch, 2014), 14.

<sup>29</sup> Muhammad Sa'eed Hawwa, *Our Youth: The Key to Success*, trans. O Salhia, (Cairao: Darussalam, 2009), 147-49.

DYNAMICS OF MUSLIM PARENTS' ROLES ON CHILDREN'S LIVES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

Anthropologically and historically, parental roles have varied across human civilisations and societies. For instance, among the Mosuo people, an ethnic minority group in south-western China and north-eastern Tibet, women lead households, play a central role in decision-making, and mothers significantly contribute to family provision.<sup>30</sup> In contrast, some African cultures assign fathers the role of primary providers, while mothers manage household duties and childcare.<sup>31</sup> However, the universality of Islam ensures its principles remain consistent globally, expecting Muslims worldwide to adhere to Islamic guidance on parental roles. Given the diverse socio-political and economic contexts of modern Muslim communities, which differ significantly from the early Islamic period in Madīnah where these roles were instituted, it is crucial to examine parental roles in a child's life through the lens of Islamic teachings, using the example of Muslims in any given society.

Table 1: Occupations and Muslim Families' Roles Survey

Family Name	Work		Work Period		Family Roles	
	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife	Husband	Wife
Dosunmu <sup>32</sup>	Engineer	Nil	Not specified	Nil	Financial provision, guidance, and leadership	House management

<sup>30</sup> R. Palaroan et al., “Socio-Anthropological Analysis of Marriage and Family among Mosuo Community in China,” *The Asian Conference on Arts & Humanities 2023 Official Conference Proceedings* (2023), 2-3.

<sup>31</sup> A. Osborne and B. O. Ahinkorah, “The Paternal Influence on Early Childhood Development in Africa: Implications for Child and Adolescent Mental Health,” *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* 18 (2024): 156.

<sup>32</sup> W. Dosunmu and R. Dosunmu, (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the authors, August 4, 2025.

Lawal <sup>33</sup>	Civil Servant	Teacher	Day and Night	7am to 4pm	Financial provision, guidance, and leadership	House management and financial support
Balogun <sup>34</sup>	Civil Servant	Trader	Day and Night	8am to 8pm	Financial provision, guidance, leadership, and home management	Home management and financial support
Ogundele <sup>35</sup>	Marketer/Driver	Teacher	Morning to Night	7am to 6pm	Financial provision, guidance, leadership, and home management	Home management and financial support
Konigbagbe	Cleric	Trader	Not specified	Not Specified	Financial provision, guidance, and leadership	Home management and financial support
Bello <sup>37</sup>	Teacher	Tailor	Day and Night	Not Specified	Financial provision, guidance, and leadership	Home management

Source: Adapted by The Researcher

Furthermore, the views of various respondents further illuminate how families negotiate financial and nurturing roles, as shown below.

<sup>33</sup> I. Lawal and K. Lawal (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the authors, August 6, 2025.

<sup>34</sup> A. Balogun and S. Balogun (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the authors, August 5, 2025.

<sup>35</sup> S. Ogundele and A. Ogundele (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the authors, August 9, 2025.

<sup>36</sup> I. Konigbagbe and K. Konigbagbe (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the authors, August 15, 2025.

<sup>37</sup> I. Bello and A. Bello (Muslim parents), in a discussion with the author, August 9, 2025.

According to Shittu, to provide my family with all the financial needs, and guide and protect them in the Islamic way to the best of my ability, ensuring that my wife stays at home to take proper care of our children in the best way possible."<sup>38</sup>

According to Orimadegun:

*"I am financially responsible for my family. For fear of financial competition and the inability to properly nurture my children. I insisted that my wife must not engage in time-consuming work or business. So, she only buys crates of eggs and distributes them to her customers within our neighbourhood."*<sup>39</sup>

According to Anisere:

*"My husband and I do not joke with the upbringing of our children. We make sure that our businesses do not overwhelm or distract us from nurturing them properly, religiously, morally, and educationally."*<sup>40</sup>  
*According to Isa: "Since I have been out of work, my wife has been the major provider for the family. Although it has been challenging for me to maintain significant authority in the family, we both endeavour to nurture our children in good ways within our capacity."*<sup>41</sup>

The above table and responses indicate that some Muslim parents are cognizant of their primary roles while trying to strike a balance between parental responsibilities and work-life. Notably, mothers, who have the primary role of home management, often engage in work or business when their children are in school. Our interactions with these parents

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<sup>38</sup> Adam Shittu (Muslim father), in discussion with the author, August 10, 2025.

<sup>39</sup> Razaq Orimadegun (Muslim father), in discussion with the author, August 8, 2025.

<sup>40</sup> Adenike Anisere (Muslim mother), in discussion with the author, August 13, 2025.

<sup>41</sup> Muhammad Isa (Muslim father), in discussion with the author, August 8, 2025.



revealed that their children attend both secular and Arabic/Islamic centres (known as *Ile-Kewu* in Yorubaland), which contribute to the children's intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. Again, while some wives contribute to household finances alongside their husbands, they also receive support from their partners in managing domestic responsibilities. This aligns with what Allah says as follows: "And if they (parents) both desire weaning through mutual consent from both of them and consultation, there is no blame upon either of them." It is also on record that ʿĀishah, was asked, "What did the Prophet SAW used to do in his house?" She said: "The Prophet SAW would do chores for his family and he would go out when it was time for prayer."<sup>42</sup> This implies that helping one's wife with household responsibilities, including raising children, is an integral part of being the protector and manager of the home.

However, some other studies have shown that due to an extensive pursuit of careers and inordinate financial competition with men, influenced by radical feminist ideology, women are increasingly abandoning their primary roles as mothers (AbdulHamid & Sanusi, 2018; Paramole & Sanni, 2020). As noted by Uthman (2020:80): "In Lagos State, many career women despise men's natural roles as they tend to assume self-sustaining status." Similarly, Paramole and Sanni notes that:

*It was observed that some women find it unfair to stay back at home, do house chores, take care of their children and look after their moral, educational, and spiritual upbringings, while their husbands go out for occupational responsibilities. No wonder why as early as 5am and as late as 10pm one often finds women jostling for end means, in public places, in the streets of Lagos, at the detriment of their family*

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<sup>42</sup> I. Bukhārī, *The Translation and Meaning of Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, trans. M. Khan, (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), 385.

*responsibilities and personal security, in the name of gender equality.*<sup>43</sup>

This does not mean that Islam forbids women from participating in economic activities; rather, unlike advocates for gender equality,<sup>44</sup> Islam promotes what is regarded as "gender mainstreaming" or "fairness of treatment for women and men according to their respective needs."<sup>45</sup> Indeed, the rights to education, work, freedom, and property are among the key ways Islam revolutionised the status of women.<sup>46</sup> While Islam does not prohibit women from seeking employment, pursuing careers, or engaging in economic activities, it provides guidelines for doing so within the Islamic boundaries. These guidelines ensure that women's biological, physical, and emotional well-being are protected, and their primary roles as mothers respected.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, Islam allows for mutual agreements between a husband and his wife, considering factors such as the circumstances and conditions of her work, family needs, financial necessity, and societal benefits.<sup>48</sup> In such situations, the wife may request assistance with household affairs and childcare. As previously quoted, Allah says in Sūratul Baqarah verse 233 that: "And if you wish to have your children nursed by a substitute, there is no blame upon you as long as you give payment according to what is acceptable."

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<sup>43</sup> Paramole and M. O. Sanni, "An Assessment of Women's Rights in Islam: Lessons for Contemporary Marital Challenges in Lagos, Nigeria," *LASU Journal of Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2020): 67.

<sup>44</sup> For instances as depicted or argued in A. O. Bashua-Johnson, *Historicising, Contextualising, and Justifying Women's Aluta Continua in Unkind Religious Spaces: LASU Inaugural Lecture Series*, 105th Edition (Lagos State University, 2025),

<sup>45</sup> R. Olademo, "Equality of Genders Is Progress for All," in *Religion and Human Capital Development: Essays in Honour of Prof. Yasir Anjola Quadri*, ed. Y. O. Imam et al. (Ilorin: Department of Religions, University of Ilorin, 2017), 186.

<sup>46</sup> Aliyu, *Women's Rights*, 9-11.

<sup>47</sup> Adegoke, "Muslim Women," 209-10; Eniola, "Women Empowerment," 172-73; R. Abdulhamid and A. M. Sanusi, "Expediency of Nigerian Muslim Women in National Development," *Journal of University Scholars in Religions* 8, no. 1 (2018):69.

<sup>48</sup> Abdulhamid and Sanusi, "Nigerian Muslim Women," 69-70.

Nevertheless, some parents, either the father, mother, or both, have abandoned their roles in their children's upbringing. In an interview<sup>49</sup> with four teenage boys at a pedestrian bridge in Oshodi, Lagos State, Nigeria, one of the interviewees, Abdul-`Aziz, 15 years old, who struggled to express himself mentioned that he left his father, with whom he had been living since his mother left him. Another interviewee, Mubarak, also 15 years of age, clearly stated that his parents' separation and lack of care had forced him to leave home and fend for himself. All the four boys claimed that during the day, they worked as load carriers, and at night, they sleep near the bridge. It was further observed that these boys have become habitual smokers and substance abusers.

**Fig. 1.** Neglected Teenagers smoking at a pedestrian bridge at Oshodi, Lagos



**Source:** Sanni Mubarak O. (Fieldwork).

Several instances of parents abandoning their children have featured on Kokoro Alate, a radio programme on Agidigbo 88.7 FM, hosted by Oriyomi Hamzat in Ibadan. In one instance, a 13-year-old girl, revealed that she did not know her father. After their mother passed away, she and her elder sister were forced out of the house by their stepfather. While wandering, she was abducted by a woman who exploited her for sex work

<sup>49</sup> In a discussion with four neglected and wandering teenagers, Azeez, Ola, Biodun, and Mubarak (ages 15-17), around Oshodi Pedestrian Bridge, off Ilupeju Road, on February 1, 2024.

in Ifo, Ogun State. She added that her abductor had aborted three pregnancies for her before she escaped, and at the time of the interview, she is again pregnant.<sup>50</sup> In another instance, a 17 year old Rofiat shared her story.<sup>51</sup> According to Rofiat, she and her five siblings were abandoned by their parents, who had separated and remarried, and were left to live with their grandmother, where they had been sleeping in the corridor of her one-room apartment. Rofiat, the second-born, explained that their father had invited her to Lagos, promising to provide her with tools for work, but he failed to follow through. While staying with her stepmother, she was denied food and had to beg for scraps in the neighbourhood. After being advised by concerned neighbours to take up a menial job to survive, her father became angry and sent her away, telling her to fend for herself. While living by the riverbank, she was approached by a young man who took her to his mother. The mother attempted to intervene on Rofiat's behalf with the local chief, hoping to persuade her father to take her back. However, her father refused.

The woman then took her in, but her son impregnated her. When Rofiat reported the pregnancy to the woman, she was given medication to terminate it and told to keep it a secret. When the termination failed, the woman sent her away. She added that, "out of the six siblings abandoned by their parents, the eldest had become a drug addict, frequenting motor parks and garages. The whereabouts of the youngest sibling are unknown. One sibling had died due to hunger and prolonged illness, and their neighbours had provided a portion of land for the burial. The remaining three siblings work as load carriers, and none of the children have ever attended school due to their parents' neglect since infancy." Rofiat and her siblings' dilemma drew significant comments from concerned members of the public. At this point, it is worth highlighting some of the comments related to Rofiat's dilemma from the

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<sup>50</sup> Àdítú Ìwà, *This is Terrible*, Àààaaa, Facebook, July 27, 2025, <https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=1721641361866197&rdid=06qhRZ9S3QX6wdYg>

<sup>51</sup> Kokoroalate Official TV, "Iru awon iya ati Baba olori buruku wo ni won bi Rofia yi," Facebook, June 29, 2025, <https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=670180636003022&rdid=jj0paBgRSplk5BFd>

interview conducted by Oriyomi Hamzat, out of over 7,200 responses. Some notable comments are excerpted below:

*I can never forget the day my mom told us she didn't believe all of us could survive. My warrior, my hero, my superwoman, may you live long to eat the fruit of your labour. If she had left us then, our story might have ended up like this.*<sup>52</sup>

*One of the reasons why I appreciate my mother till this very moment is that she never left us to go through this, even though we were all hustling together to find our daily food. She never left us to suffer. God bless all mothers who stood by their kids even in the toughest times.*<sup>53</sup>

*Kudos to my mom, Aduuni Ade. My mom single-handedly raised 5 of us. Even when she had the opportunity to travel out of the country, she refused to go because she couldn't afford to leave us with anyone. I pray she lives long to reap all she has sown.*<sup>54</sup>

*I can never trade my mother for anything. I love you, mom, for all your sacrifices for your children; you love us unconditionally. You suffered to see us grow; you*

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<sup>52</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Balogun Odunayo, June 30, 2025.

<sup>53</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Adeyemo Alaga, June 30, 2025.

<sup>54</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Olasunkanmi Akinyelu Achievers, June 30, 2025.

*are a great mother. God, I beg you, give me money to take good care of my mother.*<sup>55</sup>

*Ya Allah, please bless all the mothers who single-handedly take care of their children, care for them, and nurture them, because it's not easy to take on the role of a father and mother at once; my mother is a living example.*<sup>56</sup>

*This is a major problem we are facing in Nigeria - having children without taking care of them. These children will be another Nigerian problem tomorrow. All these useless parents will be waiting for their children to come and take care of them in the future.*<sup>57</sup>

*Some women are so wicked. I cannot leave my children for any reason, even if the father wants to collect them; I will treat the case legally.*<sup>58</sup>

*The breakups of some parents ruin their children; parents, please try to hold your home together; it affects children's lives.*<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by DJ KEMZO, June 30, 2025.

<sup>56</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Rukayat Bolatito-Diamon Murtala, July 1, 2025.

<sup>57</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Osibote Modupe Sukurat, July 1, 2025.

<sup>58</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Sherifat Agoro, July 1, 2025.

<sup>59</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Fatimoh Adegbenro Edun, July 1, 2025.

*Children are always the victims of a broken home. Innocent children suffer due to the carelessness and stupidity of their irresponsible parents.*<sup>60</sup>

*Some women are now encouraging mothers to leave their children with the fathers after a divorce. Please, whatever happens, go with your children. Many men don't really send support; they will remarry, and once that happens, your kids do not exist again as far as they are concerned.*<sup>61</sup>

*Mummy, I appreciate you despite all the struggles you have been through with my father; we all made it; we completed nine, none died. May you live long to eat the fruit of your labour, and I promise I will never leave my kids for anyone.*<sup>62</sup>

*My mom is the best in the world; I am happy she didn't leave us alone; I don't know where I would be today. Alhamdulillah, we are all survivors; I will take care of you till my last breath, mom; I love you.*<sup>63</sup>

*Some mothers are highly irresponsible. I do not understand why you would carry a pregnancy for 9*

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<sup>60</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Raheem Wasiu, July 1, 2025.

<sup>61</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Abimbola Madu, July 1, 2025.

<sup>62</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Abosede Oluwashindarah, July 2, 2025.

<sup>63</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe\\_Llm8Q](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWe_Llm8Q), Comment by Olagboyega Sofiah, July 2, 2025.

*months, go through labour, and then throw the children away. Irresponsible parents.*<sup>64</sup>

*My dad was from Ibadan, and he was a very caring and responsible father - God bless his soul. I cannot generalise about Ibadan men, but why are a lot of them so irresponsible?*<sup>65</sup>

These comments reflect appreciation for mothers, discouragement of divorce due to its adverse effects on children, and condemnation of irresponsible parenting, with many praising their mothers, especially single mothers, for standing by and nurturing them despite marital and economic challenges. Often, factors such as the irresponsibility of some fathers, maltreatment of their wives, or the excessive pursuit of material things or career by some wives, disregard for their husbands' responsible guidance, and discomfort with polygyny contribute to the breakdown of homes.<sup>66</sup> This situation ultimately leads to the neglect of parental roles towards their children.

## FINDINGS

This study reveals that the shared and complementary parental roles as dictated by Islam are often carried out with flexibility by some Yoruba Muslim parents in south-west Nigeria, allowing for mutual support and cooperation. However, in cases where fathers are financially incapacitated, mothers who are financially capable sometimes take on a more prominent role in providing for the family, potentially altering the traditional leadership dynamic. The study further reveals that in

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<sup>64</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWELlm8Q>, Comment by Bukola Oladunjoye, July 2, 2025.

<sup>65</sup> Alabaromi, "Ikunle abiamo!! itan igbesi aye Rofia gbomije loju eni," YouTube, June 30, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QwTWELlm8Q>, Comment by Arike Oluwafunsho Taiwo, July 2, 2025.

<sup>66</sup> A. K. Qasim, "An Appraisal of Challenges Facing Muslim Single Women in Alimosho Local Government Area, Lagos State" (Master's thesis, Lagos State University, 2020), 72-78.



situations of broken homes, some mothers assume both parental roles, and as a result, children often grow up to honour, appreciate, and celebrate their mothers for their sacrifices and dedication to their upbringing. In contrast, when fathers take custody of the children, they often fail to provide proper care, leading to abandonment and neglect. Perhaps, the reason for this, as because: "the months of gestation render the mother-child bond particularly unique in its intensity, leading to a complex relationship that is highly symbiotic and profoundly personal. This is one reason mothers are often invested in their children in ways that fathers sometimes are not."<sup>67</sup> As evident in the study, neglect by some fathers makes it difficult for their children to appreciate or celebrate them. It therefore means that responsible and caring fathers would be honoured and appreciated by their children.

Additionally, the study reveals that some Yoruba Muslim parents, both fathers and mothers, are highly irresponsible, abandoning their Islamic obligations to care for their children. The stories of Rofiat, Abdul-<sup>c</sup>Azīz, and Mubārak illustrate the challenges faced by many children who lack proper parental care and support, highlighting that family separation, discord, instability, poverty, and lack of access to education can drive children to engage in hazardous work, substance abuse, and other high-risk behaviours. In other words, the study reveals that parental irresponsibility among some Yoruba Muslim parents, often stemming from broken homes, not only detaches children from their parents but also deprives them of proper educational, moral, emotional, physical, biological, and spiritual upbringing. This situation exposes them to various health and social problems that can destabilise the larger society and ultimately denies these parents any form of celebration or appreciation from their children due to their absence from their lives.

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<sup>67</sup> Tsabary, *Conscious Parent*, 118-19.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

First, Islamic clerics, scholars, and institutions, domiciled in south-west Nigeria, should better educate would-be spouses and married persons about the Islamic provisions on the complementary parental roles, ensuring a deeper understanding and practical application of these principles in married life.

Second, given the contemporary socio-economic realities, in south-west Nigeria, where wives may be financially more stable than their husbands, who might be financially incapacitated for valid reasons, it is essential for wives to be supportive of their husbands in good faith without arrogating family leadership to themselves. Similarly, husbands should be humble enough to not only assist their wives in their roles but also appreciate their support.

Third, in cases of irreconcilable differences leading to divorce, it is strongly recommended that custody of the children, especially when they are young, be awarded to the mother or a capable and worthy woman with the father responsible for their maintenance, in accordance with *al-Hadānah* – Islamic custody of children.<sup>68</sup> In cases of parental disagreements over custody, it is advisable to seek the intervention of a court or arbitration institution to determine the most beneficial arrangement for the child's upbringing.

Fourth, it is recommended that prospective Yoruba Muslim spouses prioritise marrying individuals with proven religious and moral integrity, as well as a good family background, in accordance with the teachings of the Quran and *Aḥādīth*. This is crucial because spouses with strong religious and moral inclinations are more likely to adhere to Islamic teachings on parental roles and responsibilities, and their religiosity, morality, and good family background can help them navigate marital challenges and provide effective upbringing for their children.

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<sup>68</sup> Ayyoub, *Muslim Family*, 361-65; Aminu Muhammad Gurin, *An Introduction to Islamic Law*, (Lagos: Malthouse Press Limited, 2014), 191-93.

## CONCLUSION

This study, grounded in attachment theory and the concept of *Tarbiyah*, focusing on south-west Nigeria, re-examines the roles of parents in children's lives, arguing that parental honour and celebration are closely tied to the shared and complementary roles they play in their children's educational, moral, spiritual, financial, and emotional upbringing. When both parents fulfil their complementary roles, they are likely to receive balanced appreciation and celebration from their children, diverging from the contemporary trend of prioritising mothers over fathers. These complementary roles are crucial for the holistic development of children and vital for maintaining societal stability, as neglect in any area can have far-reaching detrimental effects on both children and society, ultimately denying parents the celebration and appreciation they deserve. Overall, the study emphasises the importance of responsible parenting as guided by Islamic principles, for the well-being of children, parents, and societal stability.

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